













THE WORKS  
OF  
LEWIS MORRIS

LONDON  
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## SONGS OF TWO WORLDS.

FIRST SERIES (1872).

### *SOUL-MUSIC.*

MY soul is as a bird  
Singing in fair weather,  
Deep in shady woodlands through the  
evening's dewy calm ;  
Every glossy feather  
On her full throat stirred,  
As she pours out, rapt, unconscious, all  
the sweetness of her psalm ;  
Mounting high, and higher, higher,  
Soaring now, now falling, dying ;  
Now through silvery pauses sigh-  
ing ;  
Throbbing now with joyous strife,  
And rushing tides of love and life,  
Till some ray of heavenly fire  
Shot obliquely through the shade,  
Pierces her ; and lo ! the strain  
Of the music she has made  
Fills her with a sudden pain.

Then she forgets to sing  
Her former songs of gladness ;  
Sitting mute in silence sweeter than the  
old forgotten lays ;  
Till anon some note of sadness,  
Long-drawn, languishing,  
Faint at first, swells onward slowly to  
a subtler depth of praise,

As the low, wild, minor, broken  
By the ghosts of gayer fancies,  
Like a rippling stream advances,  
Till the full tide grown too deep,  
Whispers first, then falls asleep.  
Then, as souls with no word spoken  
Grow together, she, mute and still,  
Thrills through with a secret voice,  
Which the farthest heaven can fill,  
And constrains her to rejoice.

And the passer-by who hears,  
Not the burst of pleasure,  
Swelling upward, sweet, spontaneous,  
to the portals of the sky,  
But a chastened measure,  
Low and full of tears ;  
And anon the voiceless silence, when  
the last notes sink and die,  
Deems some influence malign,  
Checks the current of her song ;  
For that none are happy long.  
Nay ; but to the rapt soul come  
Sounds that strike the singer dumb,  
And the silence is Divine ;  
For when heaven gives back the  
strain,  
All its joyous tones are o'er ;  
First the low sweet notes of pain,  
Then, the singer sings no more.



## LOVE'S MIRROR.

I SEE myself reflected in thine eyes,  
The dainty mirrors set in golden flame  
Of eyelash, quiver with a sweet surprise,  
And most ingenuous shame.

Like Eve, who hid her from the dread  
command  
Deep in the dewy blooms of paradise ;  
So thy shy soul, love calling, fears to stand  
Discovered at thine eyes.

Or, like a tender little fawn, which lies  
Asleep amid the fern, and waking,  
hears  
Some careless footstep drawing near,  
and flies,  
Yet knows not what she fears :

So shrinks thy soul ; but, dearest, shrink  
not so ;  
Look thou into mine eyes as I in  
thine :  
So our reflected souls shall meet and  
grow,  
And each with each combine

In something nobler ; as when one has  
laid  
Opposite mirrors on a cottage wall ;  
And lo ! the never-ending colonnade,  
The vast palatial hall.

So our twin souls, by one sweet suicide,  
Shall fade into an essence more sub-  
lime ;  
Living through death, and dying glori-  
fied,  
Beyond the touch of time.

## ON A YOUNG POET.

HERE lay him down in peace to take  
his rest,  
Who tired of singing ere the day was  
done.

A little time, a little, beneath the sun,  
He tarried and gave forth his artless  
song ;  
The bird that sings with the dawn,  
sings not for long,  
Only when dew is on the grass his  
breast

Quivers, but his voice is silent long ere  
noon.

So sang he once, but might not long  
sustain

The high pure note of youth, for soon,  
too soon !

He ceased to know the sweet creative  
pain

Made still one voice, amid the clamorous  
strife,

And proved no more the joys or pains  
of life.

And better so than that his voice should  
fail,

And sink to earth, and lose its heaven-  
ly tone ;

Perchance, if he had stayed, the sad  
world's moan,

The long low discord of incessant  
wrong,

Had marred the perfect cadence of his  
song,

And made a grosser music to prevail.

But now it falls as pure upon the ear,  
As sings the brown bird to the star of  
eve,

Or child's voice in grey minster quiring  
clear.

Rather then, give we thanks for him  
than grieve.  
Thoughts of pure joys which but in  
memory live,  
More joy than lower present joys can  
give.

For him, deep rest or high spontaneous  
strains ;  
For us, fierce strife and low laborious  
song ;  
For him, truth's face shining out clear  
and strong ;  
For us, half lights, thick clouds, and  
darkling days.  
No longer walks his soul in mortal  
ways,  
Nor thinks our thoughts, nor feels our  
joys or pains  
Nor doubts our doubts, nor any more  
pursues,  
Knowing all things, the far-off search-  
less cause ;  
Nor thrills with art, or nature's fairest  
hues,  
Gazing on absolute beauty's inmost  
laws ;  
Or lies for ever sunk in dreamless sleep,  
Nor recks of us ;—and therefore 'tis we  
weep.

But surely if he sleep, some fair faint  
dream,  
Some still small whisper from his an-  
cient home,  
Not joy, nor pain, but mixt of each  
shall come ;  
Or if he wake, the thought of earthly  
days  
Shall add a tender sweetness to his  
praise ;  
Tempering the unbroken joyance of his  
theme.

And by-and-by the time shall come  
when we,  
Laden with all our lives, once more  
shall meet,  
Like friends, who after infinite wastes  
of sea,  
Look in each other's eyes ; and lo ! the  
sweet  
Sad fount of memory to its depths is  
stirred,  
And the past lives again, without a  
word.

Mourn not for him ! perchance he lends  
his voice  
To swell the fulness of the eternal  
psalm ;  
Or haply, wrapt in nature's holy  
calm,  
Safe hid within the fruitful womb of  
earth,  
He ripens slowly to a higher birth.  
Mourn not for him ! but let your souls  
rejoice.  
We know not what we shall be, but are  
sure  
The spark once kindled by the eternal  
breath,  
Goes not out quite, but somewhere  
doth endure  
In that strange life we blindly christen  
death.  
Somewhere he is, though where we can-  
not tell ;  
But wheresoe'er God hides him, it is  
well.

TO THE SETTING SUN.

STAY, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast  
away  
For now it is that life revives again,

As the red tyrant sinks beneath the  
hill ;

And now soft dews refresh the arid  
plain ;

And now the fair bird's voice begins to  
thrill ;

With hidden dolours making sweet  
her strain

And wakes the woods that all day were  
so still.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast  
away ;

For now the rose and all fair flowers  
that blow

Give out sweet odours to the perfumed  
air,

And the white palace marbles blush  
and glow,

And the low, ivy-hidden cot shows  
fair.

Why are time's feet so swift, and  
ours so slow ?

Haste, laggard ! night will fall ere you  
are there.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast  
away ;

Soon the pale full-faced moon will  
slowly climb

Up the steep sky and quench the star  
of love.

Moonlight is fair, but fairer far the  
time

When through the leaves the dying  
shafts above

Slope, and the minster sounds its  
curfew chime,

And the long shadows lengthen through  
the grove.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast  
away ;

For, hark ! the chime throbs from  
the darkling tower ;

Soon for the last time shall my love be  
here :

Fair day, renew thy rays for one  
brief hour.

O sweet day, tarry for us, tarry near ;

To-morrow, love and time will lose  
their power,

And sighs be mine, and the unhidden  
tear.

Stay, O sweet day, nor fleet so fast  
away.

But, ah ! thou may'st not ; in the  
far-off west

Impatient lovers weary till you rise ;

Or may be caring naught thou  
traversest

The plains betwixt thee and thy final  
skies :

Go, then ; though darkness come,  
we shall be blest,

Keeping sweet daylight, in each other's  
eyes.

### THE TREASURE OF HOPE.

O FAIR bird, singing in the woods,

To the rising and the setting sun.

Does ever any throb of pain

Thrill through thee ere thy song be  
done :

Because the summer fleets so fast ;

Because the autumn fades so soon ;

Because the deadly winter treads

So closely on the steps of June ?

O sweet maid, opening like a rose

In love's mysterious, honeyed air,

Dost think sometimes the day will come

When thou shalt be no longer fair ;

When love will leave thee and pass on  
To younger and to brighter eyes ;  
And thou shalt live unloved, alone,  
A dull life, only dowered with sighs ?

O brave youth, panting for the fight,  
To conquer wrong and win thee fame,  
Dost see thyself grown old and spent,  
And thine a still unhonoured name :  
When all thy hopes have come to naught,  
And all thy fair schemes droop and  
pine  
And wrong still lifts her hydra heads  
To fall to younger arms than thine ?

Nay ; song and love and lofty aims  
May never be where faith is not ;  
Strong souls within the present live ;  
The future veiled,—the past forgot :  
Grasping what is, with hands of steel,  
They bend what shall be, to their will ;  
And blind alike to doubt and dread,  
The End, for which they are, fulfil.

THE LEGEND OF FAITH.

THEY say the Lord of time and all the  
worlds,  
Came to us once, a feeble, new-born  
child ;  
All-wise, yet dumb ; weak, though om-  
nipotent :  
Surely a heaven-sent vision, for it tells  
How innocence is godlike. And the  
Lord  
Renews, through childhood, to our  
world-dimmed eyes,  
The half forgotten splendours of the  
skies.

And because motherhood is sacredder  
And purer far than any fatherhood,

White flowers are fairer than red fruit,  
and sense  
Brings some retributive pain ; the vir-  
gin queen  
Sits 'mid the stars, and cloistered courts  
are filled  
With vain regrets, dead lives, and  
secret sighs,  
And the long pain of weary litanies.

And because we, who stand upon the  
shore,  
See the cold wave sweep up and take  
with it  
White spotless souls, and others lightly  
soiled,  
Yet with no stain God deems indelible :  
These are His saints mighty to intercede,  
Those in some dim far country tarry,  
and there  
Are purified ; and both are reached by  
prayer.

And as the faith once given changes not,  
But we are weak as water ; yet is life  
A process, and where growth is not is  
death.

God gave His priests infallible power to  
tell  
The true faith as it is, and how it grew :  
And lo ! the monstrous cycle shows  
complete,  
And the Church brings the nations to  
her feet.

BY THE SEA.

A LITTLE country churchyard,  
On the verge of a cliff by the sea ;  
Ah ! the thoughts of the long years past  
and gone  
That the vision brings back to me.

For two ways led from the village,—  
 One, by the rippled sands,  
 With their pink shells fresh from the  
 ebbing wave  
 For childish little hands.

And one 'mid the heath, and the  
 threat'ning  
 Loud bees with the yellow thighs,  
 And, twinkling out of the golden furze,  
 The marvellous butterflies.

And the boom of the waves on the  
 shingle,  
 And the hymn of the lark to the sun ;  
 Made Sabbath sounds of their own, ere  
 the chime  
 Of the church-going bell had begun.

I remember the churchyard studded  
 With peasants who loitered and read  
 The sad little legends, half effaced,  
 On the moss-grown tombs of the  
 dead.

And the gay graves of little children,  
 Fashioned like tiny cots ;  
 With their rosemary and southernwood,  
 And blue-eyed forget-me-nots.

Till the bell by degrees grew impatient,  
 Then ceased as the parsonage door  
 Opened wide for the surpliced vicar,  
 And we loitered and talked no more.

I remember the cool, dim chancel,  
 And the drowsy hum of the prayers ;  
 And the rude psalms vollied from sea-  
 faring throats  
 As if to take heaven unawares.

Till, when sermon-time came, by per-  
 mission  
 We stole out among the graves,

And saw the great ocean a-blaze in the  
 sun,  
 And heard the deep roar of the waves.

And clung very close together,  
 As we spelt out with wonder and  
 tears,  
 How a boy lay beneath who was  
 drowned long ago,  
 And was " Aged eleven years."

And heard, with a new-born terror,  
 The first surge of the infinite Sea,  
 Whose hither-shore is the shore of  
 Death,  
 And whose further, the Life to be.

" Did the sea swallow up little children ?  
 Could God see the wickedness done ?  
 Nor spare one swift-winged seraph to  
 save  
 From the thousands around His  
 throne ? "

" Was he still scarce older than we  
 were,  
 Still only a boy of eleven ?  
 Were child-angels children always  
 In the beautiful courts of heaven ? "

Ah me ! of those childish dreamers,  
 One has solved the dark riddle since  
 then :  
 And knows the dread secret which  
 none may know  
 Who walk in the ways of men.

The other has seen the splendour  
 And mystery fading away ;  
 Too wise or too dull to take thought or  
 care  
 For aught but the needs of the  
 day.

VOICES.

OH ! sometimes when the solemn organ  
rolls  
Its stream of sound down gray historic  
aisles ;  
Or the full, high-pitched struggling  
symphony  
Pursues the fleeting melody in vain :  
Like a fawn through shadowy groves,  
or heroine  
Voiced like a lark, pours out in burning  
song  
Her love or grief ; or when, to the  
rising stars  
Linked village maidens chant the hymn  
of eve ;  
Or Sabbath concourse, flushed and  
dewy-eyed  
Booms its full bass ; or before tasks  
begun,  
Fresh childish voices sanctify the morn :  
My eyes grow full, my heart forgets to  
beat.  
What is this mystic yearning fills my  
being ?

Hark ! the low music wakes, and soft  
and slow  
Wanders at will through flowery fields  
of sound ;  
Climbs gentle hills, and sinks in sunny  
vales,  
And stoops to cull sweet way-side  
blooms, and weaves  
A dainty garland ; then, grown tired,  
casts down  
With careless hand the fragrant coronal,  
And child-like sings itself to sleep.

Anon

The loud strain rises like a strong knight  
armed,

Battling with wrong ; or passionate seer  
of God

Scathing with tongue of fire the hollow  
shows,

The vain deceits of men ; or law-giver,  
Parting in thunder from the burning  
hill

With face aflame ; or with fierce rush  
of wings

And blazing brand, upon the crest of  
Sin,

The swift archangel swooping ; or the  
roll

Which follows on the lightning ;--all  
are there

In that great hurry of sound.

And then the voice

Grows thinner like a lark's, and soars  
and soars,

And mounts in circles, higher, higher,  
higher,

Up to heaven's gate, and lo ! the un-  
earthly song

Thrills some fine inner chord, and the  
swift soul,

Eager and fluttering like a prisoned  
bird,

Breaks from its cage, and soars aloft to  
join

The enfranchised sound, and for a  
moment seems

To touch on some dim border-land of  
being,

Full of high thought and glorious  
enterprise

And vague creative fancies, till at  
length

Waxed grosser than the thin ethereal  
air,

It sinks to earth again.

And then a strain

Sober as is the tender voice of home,  
Unbroken like a gracious life, and lo

Young children sit around me, and the  
love  
I never knew is mine, and so my  
eyes  
Grow full, and all my being is thrilled  
with tears.

What is this strange new life, this finer  
sense,  
This passionate exaltation, which doth  
force  
Like the weird Indian juggler, instantly  
My soul from seed to flower, from  
flower to fruit,  
Which lifts me out of self, and bids me  
tread  
Without a word, on dim aerial peaks,  
Impossible else, and rise to glorious  
thoughts,  
High hopes, and inarticulate fantasies  
Denied to soberer hours? No spoken  
thought  
Of bard or seer can mount so far, or  
lift  
The soul to such transcendent heights,  
or work  
So strong a spell of love, or roll along  
Such passionate troubled depths. No  
painter's hand  
Can limn so clear, the luminous air  
serene  
Of Paradise, the halcyon deep, the  
calm  
Of the eternal snows, the eddy and  
whirl  
Of mortal fight, the furious flood let  
loose  
From interlacing hills, the storm which  
glooms  
Over the shoreless sea. Our speech too  
oft  
Is bound and fettered by such narrow  
laws,

That words which to one nation pierce  
the heart,  
To another are but senseless sounds, or  
weak  
And powerless to stir the soul; but this  
Speaks with a common tongue, uses a  
speech

Which all may understand, or if it bear  
Some seeds of difference in it, only  
such  
As separates gracious sisters, like in  
form,  
But one by gayer fancies touched, and  
one  
Rapt by sweet graver thoughts alone,  
and both  
Mighty to reach the changing moods of  
the soul,  
Or grave or gay, and though sometimes  
they be  
Mated with unintelligible words,  
Or feeble and unworthy, yet can lend  
A charm to gild the worthless utterance,  
And wing the sordid chrysalis to float  
Amid the shining stars.

Oh strange sweet power,  
Ineffable, oh gracious influence,  
I know not whence thou art, but this  
I know.

Thou holdest in thy hand the silver key  
That can unlock the sacred fount of  
tears,

Which falling make life green; the  
hidden spring

Of purer fancies and high sympathies.  
No mirth is thine, thou art too high for  
mirth,—

Like Him who wept but smiled not:  
mirth is born

On the low plains of thoughts best  
reached by words.

But those who scale the untrodden  
mountain peak,

<p>Or sway upon the trembling spire, are              far          From laughter ; so thy gracious power              divine,          Not sad but solemn, stirs the well of              tears,          But not mirth's shallow spring : tears              are divine,          But mirth is of the earth, a creature              horn          Of careless youth and joyance ; satisfied          With that which is ; parched by no              nobler thirst          For that which might be ; pained by              no regret          For that which was, but is not : but for              thee.          Oh, fair mysterious power, the whole              great scheme          Lies open like a book ; and if the              charm          Of its high beauty makes thee some-              times gay,          Yet 'tis an awful joy, so mixed with              thought,          That even Mirth grows grave, and              evermore          The myriad possibilities unfulfilled,          The problem of Creation, the immense          Impenetrable depths of thought, the              vague          Perplexities of being, touch thy lips          And keep thee solemn always.                                              Oh, fair voice,          Oh virginal, sweet interpreter, reveal          Our inner selves to us, lay bare the              springs ;          The hidden depths of life, the high              desires          Which lurk there unsuspected, the              remorse          Which never woke before ; unclothe              the soul</p>	<p>Of this its shroud of sense, and let it              mount,          On the harmonious beat of thy light              wings,          Up to those heights where life is so              attuned,          So pure and self-concordant ; filled so              deep          With such pervading beauty that no              voice          Mars the unheard ineffable harmony,          And o'er white plain and breathless              summit reigns          A silence sweeter than the sweetest              sound.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>WEAKNESS MADE STRONG.</i></p> <p>If I were poor and weak,              Bankrupt of hope, and desolate of              love ;          Without a tongue to speak              The strange dumb thoughts of thee              which through me move ;          Then would I freely venture, sweet,          To cast my soul down at thy feet.</p> <p>Or were I proud and great ;              Were all men envious, and all women              kind ;          And yet my high estate              Showed poor beside the riches of my              mind :          Then would I boldly stoop, to rise          Up to the height of thy dear eyes.</p> <p>But being not weak nor strong,              Cast in the common mould of              coarser clay ;          Sure 'twere to do thee wrong              To set my humble homage in thy              way,</p>
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And cloud thy sunny morn, which I  
would fain  
Keep clear and fair, with my poor  
private pain.

Only since love and I are so ingrown,  
That for my weakness is my love so  
strong;  
And scarce I know what love's is, what  
mine own,  
Nor whether love or I inspire my  
song:  
Take thou my weakness to thy strength,  
and give  
Strength to my weakness, sweet, and  
bid me live.

### WAKING.

OPEN, my soul, thy stately portals  
wide;  
Open full wide, and let thy King  
come in!  
How shall he come? In royal pomp  
and pride,  
Ushered by braying trumpets' clamor-  
ous din;  
Clothed round with purple; crowned  
with burning gold:  
A kingly presence, glorious to behold?  
Nay; for he is no mortal king, to come  
With trumpet peals and crowds and  
garish state;  
But silent to the soul he makes his  
home,  
He enters by some lowly postern  
gate!  
And she, within her chambers far with-  
drawn,  
Cries like the wakeful bird that greets  
the dawn.

It may be 'she is seated 'mid the  
throng,  
Crowned with the flowers of life and  
youth and health;  
Thrilled through by breathing art or  
passionate song,  
Or faint with hot pursuit of fame or  
wealth;  
Rapt by the glorious thoughts of saints  
or seers,  
Or radiant with the blessed dew of  
tears.

And then the wicket swings without a  
sound,  
And lo! a ghostly presence, pale and  
gray,—

Sad eyes which dwell not on the things  
around,

But gaze for ever on the Far-off  
Day!

Then a low voice, whispering, "Thy  
King is come;  
Rejoice, be glad, for here he makes  
his home."

Then rises she and hastens to the  
gate,—

Her royal gate, and there she casts  
her down:

Prone at his feet bewails her low  
estate,

Yet prays him he will enter to his  
own!

Spurns from her all her robes of pride,  
and stands,

Knowing her shame, to do her Lord's  
commands,

Whom with a touch he fashions for her  
part;

Dowers with the precious gifts of bairn  
or sage;

The hand to fix the dreams of deathless  
art,

The imperial will, the patriot's noble  
rage :

Or fills with such fine affluence of love,  
That she grows holy as the saints above.

Then open, O my soul ! thy portals  
wide,

Open, and let thy Lord and Ruler  
come ;

Open, if haply he may here abide,  
And make within thee his eternal  
home.

Open thy gates, thy halls, thine inmost  
shrine,

Till all are flooded with the Light  
divine.

AT HAVRE DE GRACE.

ABOVE the busy Norman town,

The high precipitous sea-cliffs rise,  
And from their summit looking down

The twin-lights shine with lustrous  
eyes ;

Far out upon the fields of foam,  
The first to greet the wanderer home.

Man here has known at last to tame  
Nature's wild forces to his will ;  
Those are the lightning's fires which  
flame,

From yon high towers with ray so  
still :

And knowledge, piercing through the  
night

Of time, has summoned forth the light.

And there, hard by the lighthouse door,  
The earthly set by the divine ;

At a stone's cast, or scarcely more,  
Rises a little pagan shrine,

Where the rough seamen come to play,  
And wives, for dear ones far away.

There, on a starry orb, there stands  
A heavenly goddess, proud and fair ;  
No infant holds she in her hands  
Which must a queenly sceptre bear.

Nay ; wonder not, for this is she  
Who rules the fury of the sea.

Star of the sea, they call her, yet

Liker to Heré doth she show,  
Than Aphrodité, rising wet

From the white waves, with limbs  
aglow.

Calmer she seems, more pure and  
sweet,

To the poor kneelers at her feet.

Before her still the vestal fires

Burn unextinguished day and night ;  
And the sweet frankincense expires  
And fair flowers blow, and gems are  
bright :

For a great power in heaven is she,  
This star and goddess of the sea.

Around the temple, everywhere,

Rude tablets hung, attest her might ;  
Here the fierce surge she smooths, and  
there •

Darts downward on a bar of light ;  
To quench the blazing ship, or save  
The shipwrecked from the hungry  
wave.

And sea-gifts round the shrine are laid,

Poor offerings, costlier far than gold ;  
Such as the earlier heathen made,

To the twin Deities of old,—  
Toy ships, shells, coral, glittering spar,  
Brought here by grateful hands from  
far.

A very present help indeed,  
 This goddess is to whom they bow ;  
 We seek Thy face with hearts that  
     bleed,  
 And straining eyes, dread Lord ! but  
     Thou  
 Hidest Thyself so far away,  
 Our thoughts scarce reach Thee as we  
     pray.

But is this she, whom the still voice  
     Of angels greeted in the night ;  
 Bidding the poor maid's heart rejoice,  
     With visions hid from wiser sight :  
 This heathen nymph, this tinselled  
     queen,  
 First of all mothers who have been ?

Gross hearts and purblind eyes, to  
     make  
 An idol of a soul so sweet !  
 Could you no meaner essence take,  
     No brazen image with clay feet ;  
 No saint from out the crowd of lies,  
 False signs and shameful prodigies ?

For this one bears too great a name,  
     Above all other women blest ;  
 The blessed mother,—all her fame  
     Is His who nestled to her breast :  
 They do but dull her glory down,  
 These childless arms, this earthly  
     crown.

Poor peasant mother ! scarce a word  
     Thou spak'st, the long-drawn years  
     retain ;  
 Only thy womb once bare the Lord ;  
     Only thou knew'st the joy, the  
     pain,  
 The high hope seeming quenched in  
     blood  
 That marked thy awful motherhood.

No trace of all thy life remains,  
     From His first childhood to the  
     cross ;

A life of little joys and pains,  
     Of humble gain and trivial loss :  
 Contented if the ewes should bear  
 Twin lambs, or wheat were full in ear.

Or if sometimes the memory  
     Of that dread message of the night  
 Troubled thy soul, there came to thee  
     New precious duties ; till the flight,  
 The desert sands, the kneeling kings,  
 Showed but as half-forgotten things.

Or sometimes, may be, pondering  
     deep  
 On miracles of word and deed,  
 Vague doubts across thy soul would  
     creep,  
 Still faithful to the older creed :  
 Could this thy son indeed be He,  
 This child who prattled at thy knee ?

And of thy after-life, thy age,  
     Thy death, no record ; not a line  
 On all the fair historic page  
     To mark the life these hold divine :  
 Only some vague tradition, faint  
 As the sick story of a saint.

But thou no longer art to-day  
     The sweet maid-mother, fair, and  
     pure ;  
 Vast time-worn reverend temples gray,  
     Throne thee in majesty obscure ;  
 And long aisles stretch in minsters  
     high,  
 'Twixt thee, fair peasant, and the sky.

They seek to honour thee, who art  
     Beyond all else a mother indeed ;

With hateful vows that blight the heart,  
With childless lives, and souls that  
bleed :

As if their dull hymns' barren strain  
Could fill a mother with aught but  
pain !

To the gross earth they bind thee down  
With coils of fable, chain on chain ;  
From plague or war to save the town ;  
To give, or hold ; the sun, or rain ;  
To whirl through air a favourite  
shrine,—

These are thy functions, and divine.

And see, in long procession rise  
The fair Madonnas of all time ;  
They gaze from sweet maternal eyes,  
The dreams of every Christian clime :  
Brown girls and icy queens, the breast  
And childish lips proclaim them blest.

Till as the gradual legend grew,  
Born without stain, and scorning  
death ;

Heavenward thou soarest through the  
blue,

While saints and seers aspire beneath :  
And fancy-nurtured cam'st to be  
Queen over sky and earth and sea.

Oh, sin ! oh, shame ! oh, folly ! K's : ;  
Poor heathen, think to what you  
bow ;

Consider, beyond God's equal skies,  
What pains that faithful soul must  
know,—

She a poor peasant on the throne  
Raised for the Lord of Life, alone.

O sweet ! O heart of hearts ! O pure  
Above all purest maids of earth !  
O simple child, who didst endure  
The burden of that awful birth :

Heart, that the keenest sword didst  
know,

Soul bowed by alien loads of woe !

Sweet soul ! have pity ; intercede,  
Oh mother of mothers, pure and  
meek ;

They know no evil,—rise and plead  
For these poor wandering souls and  
weak ;

Tear off those pagan rags, and lead  
Their worship where 'tis due indeed.

For wheresoever there is home,  
And mothers yearn with sacred  
love,

There, since from Heaven itself they  
come,

Are symbols of the life above :  
Again the sweet maid-mother mild,  
Again the fair Eternal child.

WHEN I AM DEAD.

WHEN I am dead and turned to  
dust,

Let men say what they will, I care not  
aught ;

Let them say I was careless, indolent,  
Wasted the precious hours in dreaming  
thought,

Did not the good I might have done,  
but spent

My soul upon myself,—sometimes let  
rise

Thick mists of earth betwixt me and  
the skies :

What must be must.

But not that I betrayed a trust ;  
Broke some girl's heart, and left her to  
her shame ;

Sneered young souls out of faith ; rose  
by deceit ;  
Lifted by credulous mobs to wealth and  
fame ;  
Waxed fat while good men waned, by  
lie and cheat ;  
Cringed to the strong ; oppressed the  
poor and weak :  
When men say this, may some find  
voice to speak,  
Though I am dust.

### LOVE'S SUICIDE.

ALAS for me for that my love is dead !  
Buried deep down, and may not rise  
again ;  
Self-murdered, vanished, gone beyond  
recall,  
And this is all my pain.

'Tis not that she I loved is gone from  
me,  
She lives and grows more lovely day  
by day ;  
Not Death could kill my love, but  
though she lives,  
My love has died away.

Nor was it that a form or face more fair  
Forsook my troth, for so my love  
had proved  
Eye-deep alone, not rooted in the soul :  
And 'twas not thus I loved.

Nor that by too long dalliance with  
delight  
And recompense of love, my love had  
grown  
Surfeit with sweets, like some tired bee  
that flags  
'Mid roses over-blown.

None of these slew my love, but some  
cold wind,  
Some chill of doubt, some shadowy  
dissidence,  
Born out of too great concord, did o'er-  
cloud  
Love's subtle inner sense.

So one sweet changeless chord, too long  
sustained,  
Falls at its close into a lower tone :  
So the swift train, sped on the long,  
straight way,  
Sways, and is overthrown.

For difference is the soul of life and  
love,  
And not the barren oneness weak  
souls prize :  
Rest springs from strife, and dissonant  
chords beget  
Divinest harmonies.

### THE RIVER OF LIFE.

BRIGHT with unnumbered laughs, and  
swollen by a thousand tears,  
Rushes along, through upland and low-  
land, the river of life ;  
Sometimes foaming and broken, and  
sometimes silent and slumbrous,  
Sometimes through rocky glens, and  
sometimes through flowery plains.  
Sometimes the mountains draw near,  
and the black depths swirl at  
their bases,  
Sometimes the limitless meads fade on  
the verge of the sky,  
Sometimes the forests stand round, and  
the great trees cast terrible  
shadows,  
Sometimes the golden wheat waves, and  
girls fill their pitchers and sing.

Always the same strange flow, through  
changes and chances unchanging,  
Always—in youth and in age, in calm  
and in tempest the same—  
Whether it sparkle transparent and  
give back the blue like a mirror,  
Or sweep on turbid with flood, and  
black with the garbage of  
towns—

Whether the silvery scale of the min-  
now flash on the pebbles,  
Or whether the poisonous ooze cling  
for a shroud round the dead—  
Whether it struggle through shoals of  
white blooms and feathery  
grasses,  
Or bear on its bosom the hulls of ocean-  
tost navies—the same.

Flow on, O mystical river, flow on  
through desert and city ;  
Broken or smooth, flow onward into  
the Infinite sea.

Who knows what urges thee on, what  
dark laws and cosmical forces  
Stain thee or keep thee pure, and  
bring thee at last to thy goal ?  
What is the cause of thy rest or unrest,  
of thy foulness or pureness ?

What is the secret of life, or the painful  
riddle of death ?  
Why is it better to be than to cease, to  
flow on than to stagnate ?  
Why is the river-stream sweet, while  
the sea is as bitter as gall ?

Surely we know not at all, but the  
cycle of Being is eternal,  
Life is eternal as death, tears are eternal  
as joy.

As the stream flowed, it will flow ;  
though 'tis sweet, yet the sea  
will be bitter :

Foul it with filth, yet the deltas grow  
green and the ocean is clear.

Always the sun and the winds will strike  
its broad surface and gather  
Some purer drops from its depths, to  
float in the clouds of the sky ;—  
Soon these shall fall once again, and  
replenish the full-flowing river.  
Roll round then, O mystical cycle !  
flow onward, ineffable stream !

*A HEATHEN HYMN.*

O LORD, the Giver of my days,  
My heart is ready, my heart is ready ;  
I dare not hold my peace, nor pause,  
For I am fain to sing Thy praise.

I praise Thee not, with impious pride,  
For that Thy partial hand has given  
Bounties of wealth or form or brain,  
Good gifts to other men denied.

Nor weary Thee with blind request,  
For fancied goods Thy hand withholds ;  
I know not what to fear or hope,  
Nor aught but that Thy will is best.

Not whence I come, nor whither I go,  
Nor wherefore I am here, I know ;  
Nor if my life's tale ends on earth,  
Or mounts to bliss, or sinks to woe.

Nor know I aught of Thee, O Lord ;  
Behind the veil Thy face is hidden :  
We faint, and yet Thy face is hidden ;  
We cry,—Thou answerest not a word.

But this I know, O Lord, Thou art,  
And by Thee I too live and am ;  
We stand together, face to face,  
Thou the great whole, and I the part.

We stand together, soul to soul,  
Alone amidst Thy waste of worlds ;  
Unchanged, though all creation fade,  
And Thy swift suns forget to roll.

Wherefore, because my life is Thine,  
Because, without Thee I were not ;  
Because, as doth the sea, the sun,  
My nature gives back the Divine.

Because my being with ceaseless flow  
Sets to Thee as the brook to the sea ;  
Turns to Thee, as the flower to the sun,  
And seeks what it may never know.

Because, without me Thou hadst been  
For ever, seated midst Thy suns ;  
Marking the soulless cycles turn,  
Yet wert Thyself unknown, unseen.

I praise Thee, everlasting Lord,  
In life and death, in heaven and hell :  
What care I, since indeed Thou art,  
And I the creature of Thy word.

Only if such a thing may be :  
When all Thy infinite will is done,  
Take back the soul Thy breath has  
    given,  
And let me lose myself in Thee.

### IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

UNDER the picture gallery wall,  
As a sea-leaf clings to a wave-worn  
    rock,  
Nor shrinks from the surging impetu-  
    ous shock  
Of the breakers which gather and  
    whiten and fall—  
A child's form crouches, nor seems to  
    heed

The ceaseless eddy and whirl of men :  
Men and women with hearts that bleed,  
Men and women of wealth and fame,  
High in honour, or sunk in shame,  
Pass on like phantoms, and pass again.  
And he lies there like a weed.

A child's form, said I ; but looking  
    again

It is only the form that is childish now,  
For age has furrowed the low dull  
    brow,

And marked the pale face with its lines  
    of pain.

Yet but few years have fled, since I  
    first passed by,

For a dwarf's life is short if you go by  
    the sun,

And marked in worn features and lus-  
    treless eye

Some trace of youth's radiance, though  
    faint and thin,

But now, oh, strange jest ! there's a  
    beard to his chin.

And he lies there, grown old ere his  
    youth is done,

With his poor limbs bent awry.

What a passer-by sees, is a monstrous  
    head,

With a look in the eyes as of those who  
    gaze

On some far-off sight with a dumb  
    amaze ;

A face as pale as the sheeted dead,

A frail body propped on a padded  
    crutch,

And lean long fingers, which flutter the  
    keys

Of an old accordion, returning their  
    touch

With some poor faint echoes of popular  
    song,

Trivial at all times and obsolete long,  
Psalm-tunes, and African melodies,  
Not differing very much.

And there he sits nightly in heat and  
cold,  
When the fountains fall soft on the  
stillness of June,  
Or when the sharp East sings its own  
shrill tune,  
Patiently playing and growing old.  
The long year waxes and wanes, the  
great  
Flash by in splendour from rout or ball,  
Statesmen grown weary with long  
debate,  
Hurry by homewards, and fling him  
alms;  
Pitiful women, touched by the psalms,  
Bringing back innocence, stoop by the  
wall  
Where he lies at Dives' gate.

What are his thoughts of, stranded  
there?  
While life ebbs and flows by, again and  
again,  
Does the old sad Problem vex his poor  
brain?  
"Why is the world so pleasant and  
fair,  
Why, am I only who did no wrong  
Crippled and bent out of human form?  
Why are other men tall and strong?  
Surely if all men were made to rejoice,  
Seeing that we come without will or  
choice,  
were better to crawl for a day like a  
worm,  
to lie like this so long!

The blind shuffles by with a tap of  
his staff,

The tired tramp plods to the workhouse  
ward,—

But he carries his broad back as straight  
as a lord

And the blind man can hear his little  
ones laugh,

While I lie here like a weed on the  
sand,

With these crooked limbs, paining me  
night and day.

Is it true, what they tell of a far-off land,  
In the sweet old faith which was  
preached for the poor,—

Where none shall be weary or pained  
any more,

Nor change shall enter nor any decay,  
And the stricken down shall stand?"

And perhaps sometimes when the sky  
is clear,

And the stars show like lamps on the  
sweet summer night,

Some chance chord struck with a sud-  
den delight,

Soars aloft with his soul, and brings  
Paradise near.

And then—for even nature is some-  
times kind—

He lies stretched under palms with a  
harp of gold;

Or is whirled on by coursers as fleet as  
the wind;

And is no more crippled, nor weak nor  
bent;

No more painful nor impotent;

No more hungry, nor weary nor cold,—  
But of perfect form and mind.

Or maybe his thoughts are of humbler  
cast,

For hunger and cold are real indeed;  
And he looks for the hour when his  
toil shall be past,



And he with sufficient for next day's  
need :  
Some humble indulgence of food or  
fire,  
Some music-hall ditty, or marvellous  
book,  
Or whatever it be such poor souls  
desire ;  
And with this little solace, for God  
would fain  
Make even his measures of joy and  
pain,  
He drones happily on in his quiet  
nook,  
With hands that never tire.

Well, these random guesses must go  
for nought  
Seeing it is wiser and easier far  
To weigh to an atom the faintest star,  
Than to sound the dim depths of a  
brother's thought.  
But whenever I hear those poor snatches  
of song,  
And see him lie maimed in body and  
soul,  
While I am straight and healthy and  
strong,  
I seem to redden with a secret shame,  
That we should so differ who should be  
the same,  
Till I hear their insolent chariot wheels  
roll  
The millionaires along.

### WATCH.

Oh, hark ! the languid air is still,  
The fields and woods seem hushed  
and dumb.  
But listen, and you shall hear a thrill,  
An inner voice of silence come,

Stray notes of birds, the hum of bees,  
The brook's light gossip on its way,  
Voices of children heard at play,  
Leaves whispering of a coming breeze.

Oh, look ! the sea is fallen asleep,  
The sail hangs idle evermore ;  
Yet reflux from the outer deep,  
The low wave sobs upon the shore.  
Silent the dark cave ebbs and fills,  
Silent the broad weeds wave and  
sway ;  
Yet yonder fairy fringe of spray  
Is born of surges vast as hills.

Oh, see ! the sky is deadly dark,  
There shines not moon nor any  
star ;  
But gaze awhile, and you shall mark  
Some gleam of glory from afar :  
Some half-hid planet's vagrant ray ;  
Some lightning flash which wakes  
the world ;  
Night's pirate banner slowly furled ;  
And, eastward, some faint flush of day.

### DROWNED.

ONLY eighteen winters old !  
Lay her with a tender hand  
On the delicate, ribbed sea-sand :  
Stiff and cold ; ay, stiff and cold.

What she has been, who shall care ?  
Looking on her as she lies  
With those stony, sightless eyes,  
And the sea-weed in her hair.

Think, O mothers ! how the deep  
All the dreary night did rave ;  
Thundering foam and crested wave,  
While your darlings lay asleep.

How she cleft the midnight air ;  
And the idiot surge beneath  
Whirled her sea-ward to her death,  
Angry that she was so fair.

Tossed her, beat her, till no more  
Rage could do, through all the night ;  
Then with morning's ghastly light,  
Flung her down upon the shore.

Mother ! when brief years ago  
You were happy in your child.  
Smiling on her as she smiled,  
Thought you she would perish so ?

Man ! who made her what she is ;  
What, if when you falsely swore  
You would love her more and more,  
You had seen her lie like this.

And, O Infinite Cause ! didst Thou,  
When Thou mad'st this hapless  
child,  
Dowered with passions, fierce and  
wild,  
See her lie as she lies now ?

Filled with wild revolt and rage,  
All I feel I may not speak ;  
Fate so strong, and we so weak,  
Like rats in a cage,—like rats in a  
cage.

THE WANDERER.

I REARED my virgin Soul on dainty  
food,  
I fed her with rich fruit and garnered  
gold  
From gardens planted by the pious  
care  
Of the wine dead of old.

The long procession of the fabulous  
Past,  
Rolled by for me—the earliest dawn of  
time ;

The seven great Days ; the garden and  
the sword ;  
The first red stain of crime ;

The fierce rude chiefs who smote, and  
burned, and slew,  
And all for God ; the pitiless tyrants  
grand,  
Who piled to heaven the eternal monu-  
ments,  
Unchanged amid the sand ;

The fairy commonwealths, where free-  
dom first  
Inspired the ready hand and glowing  
tongue  
To a diviner art and sweeter song  
Than men have feigned or sung ;

The strong bold sway that held man-  
kind in thrall,  
Soldier and jurist marching side by side,  
Till came the sure slow blight, when  
all the world  
Grew sick, and swooned, and died ;

Again the long dark night, when  
Learning dozed  
Safe in her cloister, and the world  
without  
Rang with fierce shouts of war and  
cries of pain,  
Base triumph, baser rout ;

Till rose a second dawn of light again,  
Again the freemen stood in firm array  
Behind the foss, and Pope and Kaiser  
came,  
Wondered and turned away ;

And then the broadening stream, till  
 the sleek priest  
 Aspired to tread the path the Pagan  
 trod,  
 And Rome fell once again, and the  
 brave North  
 Rose from the church to God.

All these passed by for me, till the  
 vast tide  
 Grew to a sea too wide for any shore ;  
 Then doubt o'erspread me, and a cold  
 disgust,  
 And I would look no more.

For something said, " The Past is dead  
 and gone,  
 Let the dead bury their dead, why  
 strive with Fate ?  
 Why seek to feed the children on the  
 husks  
 Their rude forefathers ate ? "

" For even were the Past reflected back  
 As in a mirror, in the historic page,  
 For us its face is strange, seeing that  
 the race  
 Betters from age to age. "

" And if, hearing the tale we told our-  
 selves,  
 We marvel how the monstrous fable  
 grew ;  
 How in these far-off years shall men  
 discern  
 The fictive from the true ? "

Then turned I to the broad domain of  
 Art,  
 To seek if haply Truth lay hidden there ;  
 Well knowing that of old close links  
 connect  
 The true things and the fair.

Fair forms I found, and rounded limbs  
 divine,  
 The maiden's grace, the tender curves  
 of youth,  
 The majesty of happy perfect years,  
 But only half the truth.

For there is more, I thought, in man,  
 and higher,  
 Than animal graces cunningly com-  
 bined :  
 Since oft within the unlovely frame is  
 set  
 The shining, flawless mind.

So I grew weary of the pallid throng,  
 Deep-bosomed maids and stalwart  
 heroes tall.  
 One type I saw, one earthy animal seal  
 Of comeliness in all !

But not the awful, mystical human soul—  
 The soul that grovels and aspires in  
 turn—  
 The soul that struggles outwards into  
 light  
 Through lips and eyes that burn.

So, from the soulless marbles, white  
 and bare  
 And cold, too-perfect art, I turned and  
 sought  
 The canvases, where Christian hands  
 have left  
 The fruits of holy thought.

Passion I found, and love, and godlike  
 pain,  
 The swift soul rapt by mingled hopes  
 and fears,  
 Eyes lit with glorious light from the  
 Unseen,  
 Or dim with sacred tears.

But everywhere around the living tree  
I marked the tangled growths of fable  
twine,  
And gross material images confuse  
The earthly and divine.

I saw the Almighty Ruler of the  
worlds,  
The one unfailing Source of Light and  
Love,  
A sullen gray-beard set on rolling  
clouds,  
Armed with the bolts of Jove.

The Eternal Son, a shapeless new-born  
child,  
Supine upon His peasant-mother's  
knees,  
Or else a ghastly victim, crushed and  
worn  
By physical agonies.

The virgin mother—now a simple girl ;  
Or old and blurred with tears, and wan  
with sighs ;  
And now a goddess, oft-times giving  
back  
The harlot-model's eyes.

Till faring on what spark of heaven  
was there,  
Grew pale, then went out quite ; and  
in its stead,  
Dull copies of dull common life usurped  
The empire of the dead.

Or if sometimes, rapt in a sweet sus-  
pense,  
I knew a passionate yearning thrill my  
soul,  
As down long aisles from lofty quires  
I heard  
The solemn music roll ;

Or if at last the long-drawn symphony,  
After much weary wandering seemed to  
soar  
To a finer air, and subtle measures born  
On some diviner shore,

I thought how much of poor mechani-  
cal skill,  
How little fire of heart, or force of  
brain,  
Was theirs who first devised or now  
declared  
That magical sweet strain ;

And how the art was partial, not im-  
mense,  
As Truth is, or as Beauty, but confined  
To this our later Europe, not spread  
out,  
Wide as the width of mind.

\* \* \* \* \*  
So then from Art, and all its empty  
shows  
And outward-sceming truth, I turned  
and sought  
The secret springs of knowledge which  
lie hid  
Deep in the wells of thought.

The hoary thinkers of the Past I knew ;  
Whose dim vast thoughts, to too great  
stature grown,  
Flashed round as fitful lightning flashes  
round  
The black vault of the Unknown.

Who, seeing that things are Many, and  
yet are One ;  
That all things suffer change, and yet  
remain—  
That opposite flows from opposite, Life  
and Death,  
Love, Hatred, Pleasure, Pain—

Raised high upon the mystical throne  
 of life  
 Some dim abstraction, hopeful to un-  
 wind  
 The tangled maze of things, by one  
 rude guess  
 Of an untutored mind.

The sweet Ideal Essences revealed,  
 To that high poet-thinker's eyes I  
 saw ;  
 The archetypes which underset the  
 world  
 With one broad perfect Law.

The fair fantastic Commonwealth, too  
 fair  
 For earth, wherein the wise alone bore  
 rule—  
 So wise that oftentimes the sage himself  
 Shows duller than the fool ;

And that white soul, clothed with a  
 satyr's form,  
 Which shone beneath the laurels day  
 by day,  
 And, fired with burning faith in God  
 and Right,  
 Doubted men's doubts away ;

And him who took all knowledge for  
 his own,  
 And with the same swift logical sword  
 laid bare  
 The depths of heart and mind, the  
 mysteries  
 Of earth and sea and air ;

And those on whom the visionary East  
 Worked in such sort, that knowledge  
 grew to seem  
 An ecstasy, a sudden blaze, revealed  
 To crown the mystic's dream ;

Till, once again, the old light faded  
 out,  
 And left no trace of that fair day re-  
 main—

Only a barren method, binding down  
 Men's thoughts with such a chain

That knowledge sank self-slain, like  
 some stout knight  
 Clogged by his harness ; nor could wit  
 devise  
 Aught but ignoble quibbles, subtly  
 mixed  
 With dull theologies.

Not long I paused with these ; but  
 passed to him  
 Who, stripping, like a skilful wrestler,  
 cast  
 From his strong arms the precious  
 deadly web,  
 The vesture of the past ;

And looked in Nature's eyes, and, foot  
 to foot,  
 Strove with her daily, till the witch at  
 length  
 Gave up, reluctant, to the questing  
 mind  
 The secret of her strength.

And then the old fight, fought on  
 modern fields,—  
 Whether we know by sense or inward  
 sight—  
 Whether a law within, or use alone,  
 Mark out the bounds of right—

All these were mine ; and then the  
 ancient doubt,  
 Which scarce kept silence as this master  
 taught

The undying soul, or that one subtly  
probed  
The process of our thought,

And shuddered at the dreadful innocent  
talk

To the cicada's chirp beneath the  
trees—

Love poised on silver wings, love fallen  
and fouled  
By black iniquities ;

And laughed to scorn their quest of  
cosmic law,  
Saw folly in the Mystic and the Schools,  
And in the Newer Method gleams of  
truth  
Obscured by childish rules ;

Rose to a giant's strength, and always  
cried—

You shall not find the truth here, she  
is gone ;

What glimpse men had, was ages since,  
and these

Go idly babbling on—

Jangles of opposite creeds, alike un-  
true,

Quaint puzzles, meaningless logoma-  
chies,

Efforts to pierce the infinite core of  
things

With purblind finite eyes.

Go, get you gone to Nature, she is kind  
To reasonable worship ; she alone

Thinks scorn, when humble seekers  
ask for bread,

To offer them a stone.

\* \* \* \*

And Nature drew me to her, and  
awhile

Enchained me. Day by day, things  
strange and new

Rose on me ; day by day, I seemed to  
tread

Fresh footsteps of the true.

I laid life's house bare to its inmost  
room

With lens and scalpel, marked the  
simple cell

Which might one day be man or creep-  
ing worm,

For aught that sense could tell,—

Thrust life to its utmost home, a speck  
of gray

No more nor higher, traced the  
wondrous plan,

The wise appliances which seem to  
shape

The dwelling-place of man,—

Nor halted here, but thirsted still to  
know,

And, with half-blinded eyesight, loved  
to pore

On that scarce visible world, born of  
decay

Or stranded on the shore.

Marked how, the Mother works with  
earth and gas,

And with what subtle alchemy knows  
to blend

The vast conflicting forces of the world  
To one harmonious end ;

And, nightly gazing on the splendid  
stars,

Essayed in vain with reverent eye to  
trace

The chain of miracles by which men  
learnt

The mysteries of space ;

<p>And toiled awhile with spade and hammer, to learn The long long sequences of life, and those Unnumbered cycles of forgotten years Ere life's faint light arose ;</p> <p>And loved to trace the strange sweet life of flowers, And all the scarce suspected links which span The gulf betwixt the fungus and the tree, And 'twixt the tree and man.</p> <p>Then suddenly, "What is it that I know? I know the shows and changes, not the cause ; I know but long successions, which usurp The name and rank of Laws.</p> <p>"And what if the design I think I see Be but a pitiless order, through the long Slow wear of chance and suffering working out Salvation for the strong ?</p> <p>"How else, if scheme there be, can I explain The cripple or the blind, the ravening jaw, The infinite waste of life, the plague, the sword, The evil, thriftless law,</p> <p>"Or seeming errors of design, or strange Complexities of structure, which suggest</p>	<p>A will which sported with its power, or worked Not careful for the best ?"</p> <p>I could not know the scheme, nor therefore spend My soul in painful efforts to conform With those who lavished life and brain to trace The story of a worm ;</p> <p>Nor yet with those who, prizing over- much The unmeaning jargon of their science, sought To hide, by arrogance, from God and man Their poverty of thought,</p> <p>And, blind with fact and stupefied by law, Lost sight of the Creator, and became Dull bigots, narrowed to a hopeless creed, And priests in all but name.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * * *</p> <p>Thus, tired with seeking truth, and not content To dwell with those weak souls who love to feign Unending problems of the life and love Which they can ne'er explain ;</p> <p>Nor those who, parrot-like, are proud to clothe In twenty tongues the nothing that they know ; Nor those whom barren lines and numbers blind To all things else below ;</p> <p>And half-suspecting, when the poet sang And drew my soul to his, and round me cast</p>
--	---

Fine cords of fancy, but a sleight of  
words,  
Part stolen from the past—

I thought, My life lies not with books,  
but men !

Surely the nobler part is his who  
guides

The State's great ship through hidden  
rocks and sands,

Rude winds and popular tides, —

A freeman amongst freemen,—and  
contrives,

By years of thought and labour, to  
withdraw

Some portion of their load from lives  
bent down

By old abusive law !

A noble task ; but how to walk with  
those

Who by fate's subtle irony ever hold  
The freeman's ear—the cunning fluent

knave,

The dullard big with gold ?

And how, when worthier souls bore  
rule, to hold

Faction more dear than Truth, or stoop  
to cheat,

With cozening words and shallow  
flatteries

The Solons of the street ?

Or, failing this, to wear a hireling  
sword—

Ready, whate'er the cause, to kill and  
slay,

And float meanwhile, a gilded butter-  
fly,

My brief inglorious day—

Or, in the name of Justice, to confuse,  
For hire, with shameless tongue and  
subtle brain,

Dark riddles, which, to honest minds  
unwarped,

Were easy to explain—

Or, with keen salutary knife, to carve  
For hire the shrinking limb ; or else to  
feign

Wise words and healing powers, though  
knowing naught

In face of death and pain—

Or grub all day for pelf 'mid hides and  
oils,

Like a mole in some dark alley, to rise  
at last,

After dull years, to wealth and ease,  
when all

The use for them is past—

Or else to range myself with those who  
seek

By reckless throws with chance, by  
trick and cheat,

Swift riches lacking all the zest of toil,  
And only bitter-sweet.

Or worst, and still for hire, to feign to  
hear

A voice which called not, calling me to  
tell

Now of an indolent heaven, and now,  
obscene

Threats of a bodily hell.

\* \* \* \*

Then left I all, and ate the husks of sense;  
Oh, passionate coral lips ! oh, shameful

fair !

Bright eyes, and careless smiles, and  
reckless mirth !

Oh, golden rippling hair !



Oh, rose-strewn feasts, made glad with  
wine and song  
And laughter-lit ! oh, whirling dances  
sweet,

When the mad music faints awhile and  
leaves  
Low beats of rhythmic feet !

Oh, glorious terrible moments, when  
the sheen  
Of silk, and straining limbs flash  
thundering by,  
And name and fame and honour itself,  
await  
Worse hazard than the die !

All these were mine. Then, thought I,  
I have found  
The truth at last ; here comes not doubt  
to pain ;  
Here things are what they seem, not  
figments, born  
Of a too busy brain.

But soon, the broken law avenged  
itself ;  
For, oh, the pity of it ! to feel the fire  
Grow colder daily, and the soaring  
soul  
Sunk deep in grosser mire.

And oh, the pity of it ! to drag down  
lives  
Which had been happy else, to ruin,  
and waste  
The precious affluence of love, which  
else  
Some humble home had graced.

And oh ! the weariness of feasts and  
wine ;  
The jests where mirth was not, the  
nerves unstrung,

The throbbing brain, the tasteless joys,  
which keep  
Their savour for the young.

These came upon me, and a vague un-  
rest,  
And then a gnawing pain ; and then I  
fled,  
As one some great destruction passes,  
flees  
A city of the dead.

\* \* \* \*

Then, pierced by some vague sense of  
guilt and pain,  
"God help me !" I said. "There is  
no help in life,  
Only continual passions waging war,  
Cold doubt and endless strife !"

But He is full of peace, and truth, and  
rest,  
I give myself to Him ; I yearn to  
find  
What words divine have fallen from age  
to age  
Fresh from the Eternal mind.

And so, upon the reverend page I  
dwelt,  
Which shows Him formless, self-con-  
tained, all-wise,  
Passionless, pure, the soul of visible  
things,  
Unseen by mortal eyes ;

Who oft across dim gulfs of time re-  
vealed,  
Grew manifest, then passed and left a  
soul  
Thick mist of secular error to ob-  
scure  
The upward gazing soul ;

And that which told of Opposite  
Principles,  
Of Light with Darkness warring ever-  
more ;

Ah me ! 'twas nothing new, I had felt  
the fight  
Within my soul before.

And those wise Answers of the far-off  
- sage,  
So wise, they shut out God, and can  
enchain  
To-day in narrow bonds of foolishness  
The subtle Eastern brain.

And last, the hallowed pages dear to  
all,  
Which bring God down to earth, a  
King to fight  
With His people's hosts ; or speaking  
awful words  
From out the blaze of light,--

Which tell how earthly chiefs who  
loved the right,  
Were dear to Him ; and how the poet  
king  
Sang, from his full repentant heart, the  
strains  
Sad hearts still love to sing.

And how the seer was filled with words  
of fire,  
And passionate scorn and lofty hate of  
Ill,  
So pure, that we who hear them seem  
to hear  
God speaking to us still,

But mixed with these, dark tales of  
fraud and blood,  
Like weeds in some fair garden ; till I  
said,

" These are not His ; how shall a man  
discern  
The living from the dead ?

" I will go to that fair Life, the flower  
of lives ;  
I will prove the infinite pity and love  
which shine  
From each recorded word of Him who  
once  
Was human, yet Divine.

" Oh, pure sweet life, crowned by a  
godlike death ;  
Oh, tender healing hand ; oh, words that  
give  
Rest to the weary, solace to the sad,  
And bid the hopeless live !

" Oh, pity, spurning not the penitent  
thief ;  
Oh, wisdom, stooping to the little  
child ;  
Oh, infinite purity, taking thought for  
lives  
By sinful stains defiled !

" With thee, will I dwell, with thee."  
But as I mused,  
Those pale ascetic words renewed my  
doubt :  
The cheek, which to the smiter should  
be turned,  
The offending eye plucked out.

The sweet impossible counsels which  
may seem  
Too perfect for our need ; nor recog-  
nise  
A duty to the world, not all reserved  
For that beyond the skies.

"And was it truth, or some too reverent  
dream  
Which scorned God's precious processes  
of birth,  
And spurned aside for Him, the  
changeless laws  
Which rule all things of earth ?

"Or how shall some strange breach of  
natural law  
Be proof of moral truth ; yet how deny  
That He who holds the cords of life and  
death  
Can raise up those who die ?

"Yet how to doubt that God may be  
revealed ;  
Is He more strange, incarnate, shedding  
tears,  
Than when the unaided scheme fulfils  
itself  
Through countless painful years ?

"But if revealed He be, how to escape  
The critic who dissects the sacred page,  
Till God's gift hangs on grammar, and  
the saint  
Is weaker than the sage !"

These warring thoughts held me, and  
more ; but when  
The simple life divine shone forth no  
more,  
And the fair truth came veiled in stately  
robes  
Of philosophic lore ;

And 'twas the apostle spoke, and not  
the Christ ;  
The scholar, not the Master ; and the  
Church  
Defined itself, and sank to earthly  
thrones ;  
"Surely," I said, "my search

"Is vain ;" and when with magical  
rite and spell  
They killed the Lord, and sought with  
narrow creed,  
Half-fancy, half of barbarous logic  
born,  
To heal the hearts that bleed ;

And heretic strove with heretic, and  
the Church  
Slew for the truth itself had made :  
again,  
"Can these things be of Him?" I  
thought, and felt  
The old undying pain.

And yet the fierce false prophet turned  
to God  
The gross idolatrous East ; and far away,  
Beyond the horrible wastes, the lewd  
knave makes  
A Paradise to-day.

\* \* \*

Yet deep within my being still I kept  
Two sacred fires alight through all the  
strife,—  
Faith in a living God ; faith in a soul  
Dowered with an endless life.

And therefore though the world's  
foundations shook,  
I was not all unhappy ; knowing well  
That He whose hand sustained me  
would not bear  
To leave my soul in hell.

But now I looked on nature with  
strange eyes,  
For something whispered, "Surely all  
things pass ;  
All life decays on earth or air or sea,—  
All wither like the grass."

"These are, then have been, we our-  
selves decline,  
And cease and turn to earth, and are  
as they :  
Shall our dear animals rise ; shall the  
dead flowers  
Bloom in another May ?

"The seed springs like the herb, but  
not the same ;  
And like us, not the same, our children  
rise ;  
The type survives, though suffering  
gradual change,  
The individual dies.

"How shall one seek to sever, e'en in  
thought,  
Body and soul ; how show to doubting  
eyes  
That this returns to dust, while the  
other soars  
Deathless beyond the skies ?

"And if it be a lovely dream—no more,  
And life is ended with our latest breath,  
May not the same sweet fancy have  
devised  
The Lord of life and death ?

"We know Him not at all, nor may  
conceive  
Beginning or yet ending. Is it more  
To image an Eternal World, than one  
Where nothing was before ?

"Whence came the Maker ? Was He  
uncreate ?  
Then why must all things else created  
be ?  
Was He created ? Then, the Lord I  
serve,  
Lies farther off than He.

"Or if He be indeed, yet the soul dies.  
Why, what is He to us ? not here, not  
here !  
His judgments fall, wrong triumphs  
here—right sinks ;  
What hope have we, or fear ?"

I could not answer, yet when others  
came,  
Affirming He was not, and bade me  
live  
In the present only, seizing unconcerned  
What pleasures life could give,

My doubt grown fiercer, scoffed at  
them, "Oh fools,  
And blind, your joys I know ; the uni-  
verse  
Confutes you ; can you see right yield  
to might,  
The better to the worse,—

"Nor burn to adjust them ? If it were  
a dream,  
Would all men dream it ? Can your  
thought conceive  
The end you tell of better than the life,  
Which all men else believe ?

"Or if we shrink as from a hateful  
voice,  
From mute analogies of frame and  
shape,  
Surely no other than a breath Divine  
Gave reason to the ape."

"What made all men to call on God ?  
what taught  
The soaring soul its lofty heavenward  
flight ?  
What led us to discern the strait bounds  
set,  
To sever wrong from right ?

"Be sure, no easier is it to declare  
He is not than He is:" and I who  
sought  
Firm ground, saw here the same too  
credulous faith  
And impotence of thought.

And when they brought me their fan-  
tastic creed,  
With a figment for a god—mock cere-  
monies—  
Man worshipping himself—mock priests  
to kill  
The soul's high liberties, --

I spurned the folly with a curse, and  
turned  
To dwell with my own soul apart, and  
there  
Found no companion but the old doubt  
grown  
To an immense despair.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Then, as a man who, on a sunny day,  
Feeling some trivial ache, unknown be-  
fore,  
Goes careless from his happy home,  
and seeks  
A wise physician's door.

And when he comes forth, neither  
heeds nor sees  
The joyous tide of life or smiling sky,  
But always, always hears a ceaseless  
voice  
Repeating "Thou shalt die."

So all the world flowed by, and all my  
days  
Passed like an empty vision, and I said,  
"There is no help in life; seeming to  
live,  
We are but as the dead."

And thus, I tossed about long time;  
at last  
Nature rebelled beneath the constant  
pain,  
And the dull sleepless care forgot itself,  
In frenzy of the brain.

And sometimes all was blackness, un-  
relieved,  
And sometimes I would wander day  
and night,  
Through fiery long arcades, which  
seared my brain  
With flakes of blinding light.

And then I lay unmoved in a gray  
calm;  
Not life nor death, and the past came  
to seem  
Thought, act, faith, doubt, things of  
but little worth  
A dream within a dream.

\* \* \* \* \*  
But, when I saw my country like a  
cloud,  
Sink in the East, and the free ocean-  
wind  
Fanned life's returning flame and  
roused again  
Slow pulse and languid mind;

Soon the great rush and mystery of the  
sea,  
The grisly depths, the great waves  
surging on,  
Dark with white spuming crests which  
threaten death,  
Swoop by, and so are gone.

And the strong sense of weakness, as  
we sped—  
Tossed high, plunged low, through  
many a furious night,

And slept in faith, that some poor  
seaman woke  
To guide our course aright.

All lightened something of my load,  
and seemed  
To solace me a little, for they taught,  
That the impalpable unknown might  
stretch,  
Even to the realms of thought.

And so I wandered into many lands,  
And over many seas ; I felt the chill  
Which in mid-ocean strikes on those  
who near  
The spire-crowned icy hill,

And threaded fairy straits beneath the  
palms,  
Where, year by year, the tepid waters  
sleep ;  
And where, round coral isles, the  
sudden sea  
Sinks its unfathomed deep.

Upon the savage feverish swamp, I trod  
The desert sands, the fat low plains of  
the East ;  
On glorious storied shores and those  
where man  
Was ever as the beast.

And, day by day, I felt my frozen soul,  
Soothed by the healing influence of  
change,  
Grow softer, registering day by day,  
Things new, unknown, and  
strange.

Not therefore, holding what it spurned  
before,  
Nor solving riddles, which before per-  
plexed ;

But with new springs of sympathy, no  
more  
By impotent musings vexed.

\* \* \* \* \*  
And last of all I knew the lovely land  
Which was most mighty, and is still  
most fair ;  
Where world-wide rule and heaven-  
ward faith have left  
Their traces everywhere.

And as from province to province I  
wandered on,  
City or country, all was fair and sweet ;  
The air, the fields, the vines, the dark-  
eyed girls,  
The dim arcaded street ;

The minsters lit for vespers, in the cool ;  
Gay bridals, solemn burials, soaring  
chant,  
Spent in high naves, gray cross, and  
wayside shrine,  
And kneeling suppliant ;

And painting, strong to aid the eye of  
faith,  
And sculpture, figuring awful destinies :  
Thin campaniles, crowning lake-lit hills,  
And sea-worn palaces.

Then, as the sweet days passed me one  
by one,  
New tides of life through body and  
soul were sent ;  
And daily sights of beauty worked a  
calm  
Ineffable content.

\* \* \* \* \*  
And soon, as in the spring, ere frosts  
are done,  
Deep down in earth the black roots  
quicken and start,

I seemed to feel a spring of faith and  
love

Stir through my frozen heart.

\* \* \* \*

Till one still summer eve, when as I  
mused

By a fair lake, from many a silvery bell,  
Thrilled from tall towers, I heard the  
Angelus,

Deep peace upon me fell.

And following distant organ-swells, I  
passed

Within the circuit of a lofty wall,  
And thence within dim aisles, wherein  
I heard

The low chant rise and fall.

And dark forms knelt upon the ground,  
and all

Was gloom, save where some dying  
day-beam shone,

High in the roof, or where the votive  
lamp

Burned ever dimly on.

Then whether some chance sound or  
solemn word

Across my soul a precious influence cast,  
Or whether the fair presence of a faith  
Born of so great a Past,

Smote me! the wintry glooms were  
past and done,

And once again the Spring-time, and  
once more

Faith from its root bloomed heaven-  
ward—and I sank

Weeping upon the floor.

\* \* \* \*

Long time within that peaceful home  
I dwelt

With those grave brethren, spending  
silent days

And watchful nights, in solemn reverent  
thought,

Made glad by frequent-praise.

And the awakened longing for the  
Truth,

With the great dread of what had been  
before,

The ordered life, the nearer view of  
heaven,

Worked on me more and more.

So that, I lived their life of prayer and  
praise,

Alike in summer heats and wintry  
snows,

Pacing chill cloisters 'neath the waning  
stars,

Long ere the slow sun rose.

And speaking little, and bringing down  
my soul

With frequent fast and vigil, saw at  
length

Truth's face show daily clearer and  
more clear

To failing bodily strength.

For living in a mystical air, and  
parched

With thirst for faith and truth; at last  
I brought

The old too-active logic to enforce,  
The current of my thought.

And wishing to believe, I took for  
true

The shameless subtleties which dare to  
tell

How the Eternal charged one hand to  
hold

The keys of heaven and hell.

"For if a faith be given, then must  
there be  
A Church to guard it, and a tongue to  
speak,  
And an unerring mind to rule alike  
The strong souls and the weak."

"And, because God's high purpose  
stands not still,  
But He is ever with His own, the tide  
Of miracle and dogma ceases not,  
But flows down strong and wide,

"To the world's ending." So my  
mind fell prone,  
Before the Church; and teachings new  
and strange;  
The wafer, which to spirit and sense  
sustains  
Some dim incredible change—

The substance which tho' altered yet  
retains  
The self-same accidents; the Virgin  
Queen,  
Immaculate in birth, and without death,  
Soaring to worlds unseen—

The legends, sometimes foolish, oftentimes  
fair,  
Of saints who set all natural laws at  
naught;  
The miracles, the portents, not the  
charm,  
Of the old Pagan thought—

These shook me not at all, who only  
longed  
To drain the healing draught of faith  
again,  
And dreaded, with a coward dread, the  
thought  
Of the old former pain.

The more incredible the tale, the more  
The merit of belief; the more I sought  
To reason out the truth, I knew the  
more  
The impotence of thought.

And thus the swift months passed in  
prayer and praise,  
Bringing the day when those tall gates  
should close,  
And shut me out from thought and  
life and all  
Our heritage of woes.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Then, one day, when the end drew  
very near,  
Which should blot out the past for  
ever, and I  
Waited impatient, longing for the hour  
When my old self should die;

I knelt at noon, within the darkened  
aisle,  
Before a doll tawdry with rich bro-  
cade,  
And all ablaze with gems, the precious  
gifts  
Which pious hands had made:

Nor aught of strange I saw, so changed  
was I,  
In that dull fetish; nay, heaven's gate  
unsealed,  
And the veiled angels bent before the  
throne,  
Where sat their Lord revealed.

While like a flood the ecstasy of faith  
Surged high and higher, swift to fall at  
last  
Lower and lower, when the rapture  
failed  
And faded, and was past.



<p>Lo, a sweet sunbeam, straying through the gloom Smote me, as when the first low shaft of day Aslant the night-clouds shoots, and momently Chases the mists away.</p> <p>And that ideal heaven was closed, and all That reverend house turned to a dark- ened room, A den of magic, masking with close fumes The odours of the tomb.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * * *</p> <p>Then passed I forth. Again my soul was free ; Again the summer sun and exquisite air Made all things smile ; and life and joy and love Beamed on me everywhere.</p> <p>And over all the earth there went a stir, A movement, a renewal. Round the spring In the broad village street, the dark- eyed girls Were fain to dance and sing</p> <p>For the glad time. The children played their play, Like us who play at life ; light bursts of song Came from the fields, and to the village church A bridal passed along.</p> <p>Far on the endless plain, the swift steam drew A soft white riband. Down the lazy flow</p>	<p>Of the broad stream, I marked, round sylvan bends, The seaward barges go.</p> <p>The brown vine-dresser, bent among his vines, Ceased sometimes from his toil to hold on high His laughing child, while his deep- bosomed wife Cheerful sat watching by.</p> <p>And all the world was glad, and full of life, And I grew glad with it, and quickly came To see my past life as it was, and feel A salutary shame.</p> <p>For what was it I had wished ? To set aside The perfect scheme of things, to live apart A sterile life, divorced from light and love, Sole, with an empty heart.</p> <p>And wherefore to fatigue the Eternal ear With those incessant hymns of barren praise ? Does not a sweeter sound go up to Him From well-spent toilsome days,—</p> <p>And natural life, refined by honest love, And sweet unselfish liturgies of home, Heaven's will, borne onward by obedient souls, Careless of what may come ?</p>
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What need has He for praise? Forest  
and field,  
The winds, the seas, the plains, the  
mountains, praise  
Their Maker, with a grander litany  
Than our poor voices raise.

What need has He of them? And  
looking back  
To those gray walls which late had  
shown so fair,  
I felt as one who from a dungeon  
'scapes  
To free unfettered air.

And half distrustful of myself, and full  
Of terror of what might be, once more  
fled,  
With scarce a glance behind, as one  
who flees  
A city of the dead.

\* \* \* \* \*  
All through that day and night I jour-  
neyed on  
To the northward. With the dawn a  
tender rose  
Blushed in mid-heaven, and looking  
up, I saw  
Far off, the eternal snows.

Then all day higher, higher, from the  
plain,  
Beyond the tinkling folds, beyond the  
'fair  
Dense, self-sown chestnuts, then the  
scented pines,  
And then an eager air,

And then the ice-fields and the cloud-  
less heavens ;  
And ever as I climbed, I seemed to cast  
My former self behind, and all the rags  
Of that unlovely past :

The doubts, the superstitions, the  
regrets,  
The awakening ; as the soul which  
hears the loud  
Archangel summon, rising, casts be-  
hind  
Corruption and the shroud.

For I was come into a higher land,  
And breathed a purer air than in the  
past ;  
And He who brought me to the dust  
of death  
Had holpen me at last.

\* \* \* \* \*  
What then? A dream of sojourn 'mid  
the hills,  
A stir of homeward travel, swift and  
brief,  
Because the very hurry of the change  
Brought somewhat of relief.

A dream of a fair city, the chosen  
seat  
Of all the pleasures, impotent to stay  
The thirsty soul, whose water-springs  
were laid  
In dear lands far away.

A dream of the old crowds, the smoke,  
the din  
Of our dear mother, dearer far than  
fair ;  
The home of lofty souls and busy  
brains,  
Keener for that thick air.

Then a long interval of patient toil,  
Building the gradual framework of my  
art,  
With eyes which cared no more to seek  
the whole,  
Fast fixed upon the part.

<p>And mind, which shunned the general,              absorbed          In the particular only, till it saw          What boundless possibilities lie for              men          'Twixt matter and high law !</p>	<p>And Knowledge gave me gold, and              power, and fame,          And honour ; and Love, a clearer,              surer view :          Thus in calm depths I moored my              weary soul          Fast anchored to the True.</p>
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<p>How that which may be rules, not that              which must ;          And absolute truth revealed, would              serve to blind          The soul's bright eye, and sear with              tongues of flame          The sinews of the mind.</p>	<p>And now the past lies far away, and I          Can scarce recall those vanished days              again ;          No more the old faith stirs me, and no              more          Comes the old barren pain.</p>
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<p>How in the web of life, the thread of              truth          Is woven with error ; yet a vesture              fair          Comes from the loom—a precious royal              robe          Fit for a god to wear.</p>	<p>For now each day brings its appointed              toil,          And every hour its grateful sum of care ;          And life grows sweeter, and the gracious              world          Shows day by day more fair.</p>
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<p>Till at the last, upon the crest of toil          Sat Knowledge, and I gained a newer              truth :          Not the pale queen of old, but a soft              maid,          Filled with a tender ruth.</p>	<p>For now I live a two-fold life ; my own          And yet another's ; and another heart          Which beats to mine, makes glad the              lonely world          Where once I lived apart.</p>
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<p>And, ray by ray, the clear-faced unity          Orbed itself forth, and lo ! the noble              throng          Of patient souls, who sought the truth              in act,          And grew, through silence, strong.</p>	<p>And little lives are mine to keep un-              stained,          Strange mystic growths, which day by              day expand,          Like the flowers they are, and set me              in a fair          Perpetual wonderland.</p>
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<p>Till prizing union more than dissidence,          And holding dear the race, I came to              prove          A spring of sympathy within, which              swelled          To a deep stream of love.</p>	<p>New senses, gradual language, dawning              mind,          And with each day that passes, traced              more strong          On those white tablets, awful characters          That tell of right and wrong.</p>
--	--

And what hand wrote them ? One brief  
life declined,  
Went from us, and is not. Ah ! what  
and where  
Is that fair soul ? Surely it somewhere  
blooms  
In purer, brighter air.

What took it hence, and whither ? Can  
I bear  
To think, that I shall turn to a herb, a  
tree,  
A little earth or lime, nor care for these,  
Whatever things may be ?

Or shall the love and pity I feel for  
these  
End here, nor find a higher type or  
task ?  
I am as God to them, bestowing more  
Than they deserve or ask.

And shall I find no Father ? Shall my  
being  
Aspire in vain for ever, and always tend  
To an impossible goal, which none  
shall reach,—  
An aim without an end ?

Or, shall I heed them when they bid  
me take  
No care for aught but what my brain  
may prove ?  
I, through whose inmost depths from  
birth to death,  
Strange heavenward currents  
move ;

Vague whispers, inspirations, memories,  
Sanctities, yearnings, secret question-  
ings,  
And oft amid the fullest blaze of noon,  
The rush of hidden wings ?

Nay ; my soul spurns it ! Less it is to  
know  
Than to have faith : not theirs who cast  
away  
The mind God gave them, eager to adore  
Idols of baser clay.

But theirs, who marking out the bounds  
of mind,  
And where thought rules, content to  
understand,  
Know that beyond its kingdom lies a  
dread  
Immeasurable land.

A land which is, though fainter than a  
cloud,  
Full of sweet hopes and awful destinies :  
A dim land, rising when the eye is clear  
Across the trackless seas.

\* \* \* \*

O life ! O death ! O faithful wandering  
soul !  
O riddle of being, too hard to under-  
stand !  
These are Thy dreadful secrets, Lord ;  
and we  
The creatures of Thy hand.

O wells of consciousness, too deep for  
thought,  
These are Thy dwelling, awful Lord  
Divine ;  
Thine are we still, the creatures of Thy  
hand,  
Living and dying, Thine.

THE WEARY RIVER.

THERE is a ceaseless river,  
Which flows down evermore  
Into a wailing ocean,  
A sea without a shore

Broken by laughing ripple,  
Foaming with angry swell,  
Sweet music as of heaven,  
Deep thunder as of hell.

Gay fleets float down upon it,  
And sad wrecks, full of pain :  
But all alike it hurries  
To that unchanging main.

Sometimes 'tis foul and troubled,  
And sometimes clear and pure ;  
But still the river flows, and still  
The dull sea doth endure.

And thus 'twill flow for ever,  
Till time shall cease to be :  
O weary, weary river,  
O bitter, barren sea.

#### TRUTH IN FALSEHOOD.

YOUR little hand in mine I rest :  
The slender fingers, white and long,  
Lie in my broad palm, rude and  
strong,  
Like birdlings in their nest.

Yours, like yourself, so soft and white,  
So delicately free from soil ;  
Mine sunbrowned, hard with moil  
and toil,  
And seamed with scars of fight.

Dear love ! sometimes your innocence  
Strikes me with sudden chills of fear ;  
What if you saw before you, dear,  
The secret gulfs of sense ?—

The coarseness, the deceit, the sin,  
We know, who 'mid the sordid crowd  
Must press, nor midst the tumult loud  
Can hear the voice within ?

What if you saw me with the eyes  
Of others,—nay, my own,—or heard  
The unworthy tale, the biting word,  
The sneer that worldlings prize ?

Or knew me as I am indeed,  
No hero free from blot or stain,  
But a poor soul who drags his chain  
With halting feet that bleed,—

Who oft-time slips and falls, content,  
Though bruised and weary, faint and  
worn,  
He toils all night, if with the morn  
When life and strength are spent,

He sees some far-off struggling ray,  
Dispel the palpable obscure,  
And on the eastern hills, the pure  
White footprints of the day ?

But you, oh love, can never know  
These darkling paths ; for you the  
light  
Shines always changeless, always  
bright,  
The self-same tempered glow.

And love with innocence combined  
The nunnery of your heart shall  
guard,  
And faith with eye unfailing ward  
The jewel of your mind.

So be it : I would sooner be  
Steeped to the lips in lie and cheat,  
A very monster of deceit,  
Than bare myself to thee.

Nay, rather would I dare to hear  
At that great Day from lips of flame,  
Blown to all souls my tale of shame,  
Than whispered in thine ear.

Strange riddle, to those who never  
knew

Of good with evil intertwined  
The two-fold self, the links that bind  
The false things to the true ;

But to the seeing eye more clear  
Than blaze of noonday. So be sure  
If such deceit might keep thee  
pure,  
I'd glory in it, dear.

## TWO VOYAGES.

Two ships which meet upon the ocean  
waste,

And stay a little while, and interchange  
Tidings from two strange lands, which  
lie beneath

Each its own heaven and particular  
stars,

And fain would tarry ; but the im-  
patient surge  
Calls, and a cold wind from the setting  
sun

Divides them, and they sadly drift apart,  
And fade, and sink, and vanish, 'neath  
the verge—

One to the breathless plains and  
treacherous seas

Smitten by the tyrannous Sun, where  
mind alone

Withers amid the bounteous outer-  
world,

And prodigal Nature dwarfs and chains  
the man—

One to cold rains, rude winds, and  
hungry waves

Spilt on the frowning granite, niggard  
suns,

And snows and mists which starve the  
vine and palm,

But nourish to more glorious growth  
the man.

One to the scentless flowers and song-  
less birds,

Swift storms and poison stings and  
ravaging jaws :

One to spring violets and nightingales,  
Sleek-coated kine and honest gray-eyed  
skies.

One to lie helpless on the stagnant sea,  
Or sink in sleep beneath the hurricane :

One to speed on, white-winged, through  
summer airs,

Or sow the rocks with ruin—who  
shall tell ?

So with two souls which meet on life's  
broad deep,

And cling together but may not stay ;  
for Time

And Age and chills of Absence wear  
the links

Which bind them, and they part for  
evermore—

One to the tropic lands of fame and  
gold,

And feverish thirst and weariness of  
soul ;

One to long struggles and a wintry life,  
Decked with one sweet white bloom of  
happy love.

For each, one fate, to live and die  
apart,

Save for some passing smile of kindred  
souls ;

Then drift away alone, on opposite  
tides,

To one dark harbour and invisible goal.

*THE WISE RULE.*

"TIME flies too fast, too fast our life  
decays."

Ah, faithless ! in the present lies our  
being ;  
And not in lingering love for vanished  
days !

"Come, happy future, when my soul  
shall live."

Ah, fool ! thy life is now, and not  
again ;  
The future holds not joy nor pain to  
give !

"Live for what is : future and past are  
naught."

Ah, blind ! a flash, and what shall  
be, has been.  
Where, then, is that for which thou  
takest thought ?

Not in what has been, is, or is to be,  
The wise soul lives, but in a wider  
time,  
Which is not any, but contains the  
three !

*THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING.*

"CRY, cry aloud in the land, cry aloud  
in the streets of the city ;

Cry and proclaim that no more shall  
the blood of the people be shed.  
Too long have the great ones waxed  
strong, without justice or any  
pity,

Too long have they ground down the  
poor, and eaten the people as  
bread."

Thus said the voice from the dead.

"Terrible voice, I said, immoderate,  
voice of unreason,

Not of themselves do the lowly ones  
mourn, or the great ones rejoice ;  
He who hath made them unequal,  
hath made all things in their  
season ;

If they are mighty and strong, they  
were made without freedom or  
choice."

"Cry, cry aloud," said the voice.

"How shall the sins of the few be  
reckoned against the many ?

Are there no tender hearts and kind  
'midst the selfish and proud ;  
Merciful souls and pure, full of love for  
their suffering brothers ;  
Pitiful, touched with compassion and  
care for the desolate crowd ?"

"Cry," said the voice, "cry aloud."

"Nay, but the world is ruled by merci-  
less rules unbending ;

The feeble folk fade from the earth,  
and only the mighty remain ;  
Not men alone, but all things send  
upwards a clamour unending ;  
Always the whole creation travails in  
sorrow and pain. '

"Cry," said the voice, "cry again."

"Are not our sins and our fathers'  
worked out in our children's  
sorrow ?

Does not excess of laughter sink at its  
close in a sigh ?

Mirth and enjoyment to-day turn to  
pain and repentance to-morrow ;

Thousands are born every hour, in the  
place of the thousands who die."

"Cry," said the stubborn voice,

"cry."

“Lo! He hath made all things; good  
and evil, sorrow and pleasure;  
Not as your ways are His ways, yet are  
ye not all in His hand?  
Just is He, though ye know not the  
measure wherewith He will  
measure;  
Dark things shall one day be clear;  
to obey is to understand!”  
Thus that voice, solemn and grand.

## OTHER DAYS.

○ THRUSH, your song is passing sweet,  
But never a song that you have sung  
Is half so sweet as thrushes sang  
When my dear love and I were young.

○ Roses, you are sweet and red,  
Yet not so red nor sweet as were  
The roses that my mistress loved  
To bind within her flowing hair.

Time filches fragrance from the flower;  
Time steals the sweetness from the  
song;

Love only scorns the tyrant's power,  
And with the growing years grows  
strong.

## THE TRUE MAN.

TAKE thou no thought for aught save  
right and truth,  
Life holds for finer souls no equal prize;  
Honour and wealth are baubles to the  
wise,  
And pleasure flies on swifter wing than  
youth.

If in thy heart thou bearest seeds of  
hell,  
Though all men smile, yet what shall  
be thy gain?  
Though all men frown, if truth and  
right remain,  
Take thou no thought for aught; for it  
is well.

Take thou no thought for aught; nor  
deem it shame  
To lag behind while knaves and dullards  
rise;  
Thy soul asks higher guerdon, purer  
fame,  
Than to loom large and grand in vulgar  
eyes.  
Though thou shouldst live thy life in  
vile estate,  
Silent, yet knowing that deep within  
thy breast  
Unkindled sparks of genius lie re-  
pressed,—  
Greater is he who is, than seemeth,  
great.

If thou shouldst spend long years of  
hope deferred,  
Chilled through with doubt, and sickening  
to despair;  
If as cares thicken friends grow cold  
and rare,  
Nor favouring voice in all the throng  
be heard;  
If all men praise him whom thou  
know'st to be  
Of lower aims and duller brain than  
thine,—  
Take thou no thought, though all men  
else combine  
In thy despite: their praise is naught  
to thee.



Bethink thee of the irony of fate,  
 How great men die inglorious and  
     alone ;  
 How Dives sits within upon his throne,  
 While good men crouch with Lazarus  
     at the gate.  
 Our tree of life set on Time's hither  
     shore  
 Blooms like the secular aloe once an  
     age :  
 The great names scattered on the  
     historic page  
 Are few indeed, but the unknown are

Waste is the rule of life: the gay  
     flowers spring,  
 The fat fruits drop, upon the untrodden  
     plain ;  
 Sea-sands at ebb are silvered o'er with  
     pain ;  
 The fierce rain beats and mars the  
     feeble wing ;  
 Fair forms grow fairer still for deep  
     disease ;  
 Hearts made to bless are spent apart,  
     alone.  
 What claim hast thou to joy, while  
     others moan ?  
 God made us all, and art thou more  
     than these ?

Take thou no care for aught save truth  
     and right ;  
 Content, if such thy fate, to die obscure ;  
 Wealth palls and honours, Fame may  
     not endure,  
 And loftier souls soon weary of delight.  
 Keep innocence ; be all a true man  
     ought ;  
 Let neither pleasure tempt, nor pains  
     appal :

Who hath this, he hath all things,  
     having naught ;  
 Who hath it not, hath nothing, having  
     all.

## PASSING.

To spring, to bloom, to fade,—  
 This is the sum of the laborious years ;  
 Life preludes death as laughter ends in  
     tears :  
 All things that God has made  
 Suffer perpetual change, and may not  
     long endure.

We alter day by day ;  
 Each little moment, as life's current  
     rolls,  
 Stamps some faint impress on our  
     yielding souls ;  
 We may not rest nor stay,  
 Drifting on tides unseen to one dread  
     goal and sure.

Our being is compassed round  
 With miracles ; on this our life-long  
     sleep,  
 Strange whispers rise from the sur-  
     rounding deep,  
 Like that weird ocean sound  
 Borne in still summer nights on weary  
     watching ears,

The selves we leave behind  
 Affright us like the ghosts of friends  
     long dead ;  
 The old love vanished in the present  
     dread,  
 They visit us to find  
 New sorrows, alien hopes, strange  
     pleasures, other fears.

## FETTERS.

OH who shall say that we are free !  
 Surely life's chains are strong to  
 bind  
 From youth to age, from birth to death,  
 Body and mind.

We run the riotous race of youth,  
 Then turn from evil things to good :  
 'Tis but a slower pulse, a chill  
 Of youth's hot blood.

We mount the difficult steep of thought,  
 Or pace the dusty paths of gain :  
 'Tis but that sense receding leaves  
 A keener brain.

Time takes this too, and then we turn  
 Our dim eyes to the hidden shore ;  
 Life palls, and yet we long to live,—  
 Ay, nothing more.

## RICH AND WISE.

WILD flowers in spring were sweet to  
 childish hands  
 As riches to the wretch possessing  
 naught ;

And as the water-springs in desert  
 lands

Are the pale victories of patient  
 thought :

But sweeter, dearest, sweeter far,  
 The hours when we together are.

No more I know the childish joys of  
 old,

Nor yet have learnt the grave delights  
 of age :

A miser, gloat I on thy locks' rich  
 gold ;

A student, ponder on thy soul's fair  
 page.

Thus do I grow both rich and wise,  
 On these fair locks and those deep  
 eyes.

Therefore in wit and wealth do I in-  
 crease,

Poring on thee, as on a fair writ  
 book ;

No panic-fear can make that rich stream  
 cease,

Nor doubt confuse the crystal of thy  
 look.

Some to the mart, some to the oratory,  
 May turn them : thou art both to me.

## LOVE IN DEATH.

DEAR heart ! what a little time it is since Francis and I used to walk  
 From church in the still June evenings together, busy with loving talk ;  
 And now he is gone, far away over seas, to some strange foreign country,—and I  
 Shall never rise from my bed any more, till the day when I come to die.

I tried not to think of him during the prayers ; but when his dear voice I heard,  
 I failed to take part in the hymn ; for my heart fluttered up to my throat like a  
 bird,

And scarcely a word of the sermon I caught. I doubt 'twas a grievous sin ;  
 But 'twas only one poor little hour in the week that I had to be happy in.

When the blessing was given, and we left the dim aisles for the light of the evening star ;  
 Though I durst not lift up my eyes from the ground, yet I knew that he was not far.  
 And I hurried on, though I fain would have stayed, till I heard his footstep draw near ;  
 And love rising up in my breast like a flame, cast out every shadow of fear.

Ah me ! 'twas a pleasant pathway home,—a pleasant pathway and sweet ;  
 Ankle deep through the purple clover ; breast high 'mid the blossoming wheat ;  
 I can hear the landrails prate through the dew, and the night-jars' tremulous thrill,  
 And the nightingale pouring her passionate song from the hawthorn under the hill.

One day, when we came to the wicket gate, 'neath the elms, where we used to part,  
 His voice began to falter and break as he told me I had his heart.  
 And I whispered back that mine was his : we knew what we felt long ago ;  
 Six weeks are as long as a lifetime almost, when you love each other so.

So we put up the banns, and were man and wife, in the sweet fading time of the year,  
 And till Christmas was over and past, I knew no shadow of sorrow or fear.  
 It seems like a dream already, alas ! a sweet dream vanished and gone,  
 So hurried and brief while passing away, so long to look back upon.

I had only had him three little months, and the world lay frozen and dead,  
 When the summons came, which we feared and hoped, and he sailed over seas  
 for our bread.

Ah, well ! it is fine to be wealthy and grand, and never to need to part ;  
 But 'tis better far to love and be poor than be rich with an empty heart.

Though I thought 'twould have killed me to lose him at first, yet was he not  
 going for me ?

So I hid deep down in my breast all the grief, which I knew it would pain him  
 to see.

He'd surely be back by the autumn, he said ; and since his last passionate kiss  
 He has scarcely been out of my thoughts, day or night, for a moment, from that  
 day to this.

When I wrote to him how I thought it would be, and he answered so full of  
 love,

Ah ! there was not an angel happier than I, in all the white chorus above.

And I seemed to be lonely no longer, the days and the weeks passed so swiftly away ;  
And the March winds died, and the sweet April showers gave place to the blossoms of May.

And then came the sad summer eve, when I sat with the little frock in the sun,  
And Patience ran in with the news of the ship—Ah, well ! may His will be done.

They said that all hands were lost, and I swooned away on the floor like a stone ;

And another life came, ere I knew he was safe, and my own was over and gone.

\* \* \* \* \*

And now I lie helpless here, and shall never rise up again ;  
I grow weaker and weaker, day by day, till my weakness itself is a pain.  
Every morning the slow dawn creeps ; every evening I see from my bed  
The orange-gold fade into lifeless gray, and the old evening star overhead.

Sometimes by the twilight dim, or the awful birth of the day,  
As I lie, very still, not asleep nor awake, my soul seems to flutter away ;  
And I float far beyond the stars, till I thrill with a rapturous pain,  
And the feeble touch of a tiny hand recalls me to life again.

And the doctor says she will live. Ah ! 'tis hard to leave her alone,  
And to think she will never know, in the world, the love of the mother who's gone.

They will tell her of me, by-and-by, and perhaps she will shed me a tear ;  
But if I should stoop to her bed in the night, she would start with a horrible fear.

She will grow into girlhood, I trust, and will bask in the light of love,  
And I, if I gain to see her at all, shall only look on from above.  
I shall see her and cannot aid, though she fall into evil and woe.  
Ah, how can the angels find heart to rejoice, when they think of their dear ones  
below ?

And Francis, he too will forget me, and go on the journey of life ;  
And I hope, though I dare not think of it yet, will take him another wife—  
It will hardly be Patience, I think, though she liked him in days gone by.  
Was that why she came ? But what thoughts are these for one who is soon to die ?

I hope he will come ere I go, though I feel no longer the thirst  
For the sound of his voice and the light of his eye, which I used to feel at first.

'Tis not that I care for him less, but death dries, with a finger of fire,  
The tender springs of innocent love and the torrents of strong desire.

And I know we shall meet again. I have done many things that are wrong,  
But surely the Lord of Life and of Love cannot bear to be angry long.  
I am only a girl of eighteen, and have had no teacher but love ;  
And, it may be, the sorrow and pain I have known will be counted for me  
above.

For I doubt if the minister knows all the depths of the goodness of God,  
When he says, He is jealous of earthly love, and bids me bow down 'neath the  
rod.

He is learned and wise, I know, but somehow to dying eyes  
God opens the secret doors of the shrine that are closed to the learned and wise.

So now I am ready to go, for I know He will do what is best,  
Though He call me away while the sun is on high, like a child sent early to rest.  
I should like him to see her first, though the yearning is over and past :  
But what is that footstep upon the stair? Oh, my darling at last, at last !

#### DEAR LITTLE HAND.

DEAR little hand that clasps my own,  
Embrowned with toil and seamed  
with strife ;  
Pink little fingers not yet grown  
To the poor strength of after-life,—  
Dear little hand !

Dear little eyes which smile on mine  
With the first peep of morning light ;  
Now April-wet with tears, or fine  
With dews of pity, or laughing  
bright.  
Dear little eyes !

Dear little voice, whose broken speech  
All eloquent utterance can transcend ;  
Sweet childish wisdom strong to reach  
A holier deep than love or friend :  
Dear little voice !

Dear little life ! my care to keep  
From every spot and stain of sin ;  
Sweet soul foredoomed, for joy or pain,  
To struggle and—which? to fail or  
win?  
Dread mystical life !

#### STILL WATERS.

A CRUEL little stream I know,  
Which slowly, slowly crawls between  
The ooze banks, fringed with sedges  
green,  
That serve to bind its feeble flow.

So sheltered that no passing breath  
Of west-wind stirs it ; nay, the blast  
Which strips the tall elms and is  
past,  
Scarce wakes to life its face of death.

On its black surface year by year  
The marsh flowers, grown untimely  
old,  
Shed their soft petals like a tear,  
And hopeless drown their faded  
gold.

Deep in its darkling depths the pike  
Darts with his cruel jaws ; by night  
The black eels, sinuous, serpent-like,  
Twist like fell ghosts that fear the  
light.

Spring shuns it, summer loves it not ;  
The low fat fields are lit with bloom,  
But here the watery sedges rot,  
And all the months are clothed with  
gloom.

Autumn's first footstep sears to brown  
Its coarse green fringe ; the first cold  
breath,  
Ere yet the oak-leaf flutters down,  
Binds its dull life in icy death.

I hate, I hate you, crawling stream !  
Dumb, creeping, murderous wretch,  
I long  
To see the sunlit ripples gleam,  
To hear the torrent's jubilant song.

But you, dull monster, all the years  
Lie rolling on your sullen flood,  
And take your fill of mortal tears ;  
Yet, like the Churchmen, spill not  
blood.

The dark gap in the ice, the boat  
Keel upward, or the drifting oar ;  
Or, like of old, the little coat,  
The white clothes heaped upon the  
shore ;

And some young life is over and  
gone,  
And some fond heart is broken in  
twain ;  
And you flow smoothly, smoothly on,  
Taking no heed for death or pain.

They come and grapple with hooks  
until  
They reach the slimy deep, where  
lies  
The white thing, very cold and still,  
With death's gaze in its stony eyes.

And you just make a ripple, and then  
Flow smoothly onward : you who  
slew  
Young innocent lives of painted men,  
Long ere the crowded city grew ;

And shall in far years yet to be,  
Pierce unborn mothers with that  
sharp pain,  
Which only a mother feels when he  
Who was her first-born comes again,

A clay-cold heap. I would that I  
Had but the archangel's flaming  
brand ;  
So would I burn thy dull springs dry,  
And choke thy flow with hills of  
sand.

Yet why ? Whatever soft souls prate,  
Babbling of universal good,  
Love is the sister-child of hate,  
And all good things are bought with  
blood.

Virtue were not if vice were not,  
Nor darkness if there were not light.  
Creep on ; fulfil thy murderous lot ;  
For Wrong has equal life with Right.

## IN REGENT STREET.

ONE of the nightly hundreds who  
pass  
Wearily, hopelessly, under the gas.

But the old sad words had a strange  
new tone,  
And the wild laugh seemed to sink to  
a moan.

So that turning as one constrained to  
look,  
The strange sight stifled the voice of  
rebuke:

For I looked on a girl's face pure and  
fair,  
Blue-eyed, and crowned with a glory  
of hair,

Such as my dead child-sister might  
own,  
Were she not a child still, but a  
woman grown;

Full of the tender graces that come  
To the cherished light of an ancient  
home;

Even to that touch of a high disdain,  
Which is born of a name without blot  
or stain.

Strange; as if one should chance to  
meet  
An angel of light in that sordid street!

"O child, what misery brings you  
here,  
To this place of vileness and weeping  
and fear?"

"I am no more than the rest," she  
said,  
Proudly averting her beautiful head!

Then no response, till some kinder  
word  
Stole in unawares, and her heart was  
stirred.

"I was a wife but the other day,  
Now I am left without hope or stay!

"Work did I ask? What work is for  
you?  
What work can those delicate fingers  
do?

"Service? But how could I bear to  
part  
From the child with whom I had left  
my heart?

"Alms?—Yes, at first; then a pitiless  
No:  
The State would provide me whither  
to go.

"But in sordid prisons it laid my head  
With the thief and the harlot; there-  
fore I fled.

"One thing alone had I left untried,  
Then I put off the last rag of pride."

"What came? 'You were of an hon-  
oured race,  
Now you must live with your own  
disgrace.'

"But many will buy where few will  
give,  
And I die every day that my child may  
live."

Motherly love sunk to this ! Ah, well,  
Teach they not how He went down into  
hell :

Only blind me in heart and brain,  
Or ever I look on the like again.

FROM THE DESERT:

THOU hast visited me with Thy storms,  
And the vials of Thy sore displeasure  
Thou hast poured on my head, like a  
bitter draught

Poured forth without stint or measure ;  
Thou hast bruised me as flax is bruised ;  
Made me clay in the potter's wheel ;  
Thou hast hardened Thy face like steel,  
And cast down my soul to the ground ;  
Burnt my life in the furnace of fire,  
like dross,  
And left me in prison where souls are  
bound :

Yet my gain is more than my loss.

What if Thou hadst led my soul  
To the pastures where dull souls feed ;  
And set my steps in smooth paths, far  
away

From the feet of those that bleed ;  
Penned me in low, fat plains,  
Where the air is as still as death,  
And Thy great winds are sunk to a  
breath,

And Thy torrents a crawling stream,  
And the thick steam of wealth goes up  
day and night,

Till Thy sun gives a veiled light,  
And heaven shows like a vanished  
dream !

What if Thou hadst set my feet  
With the rich in a gilded room ;

And made me to sit where the scorners  
sit,

Scoffing at death and doom !

What if I had hardened my heart  
With dark counsels-line upon line ;  
And blunted my soul with meat and  
wine,

Till my ears had grown deaf to the  
bitter cry

Of the halt and the weak and the  
impotent ;

Nor hearkened, lapt in a dull content,  
To the groanings of those who die !

My being had waxed dull and dead  
With the lusts of a gross desire ;  
But now Thou hast purged me throughly,  
and burnt

My shame with a living fire.

So burn me, and purge my will

Till no vestige of self remain,

And I stand out white without spot or  
stain.

Then let Thy flaming angel at last  
Smite from me all that has been before ;  
And sink me, freed from the load of  
the past,

In Thy dark depths evermore.

DUMB.

ALL men are poets if they might but  
tell

The dim ineffable changes which the  
sight

Of natural beauty works on them : the  
charm

Of those first days of Spring, when life  
revives

And all the world is bloom : the white-  
fringed green

Of summer seas swirling around the base



Of overhanging cliffs ; the golden  
gleam  
Seen from some breezy hill, where far  
and wide  
The fields grow ripe for harvest ; or the  
storm  
Smiting the leaden surf, or echoing  
On nightly lakes and unsuspected hills,  
Revealed in lurid light ; or first per-  
ceived,  
High in mid-heaven, above the rosy  
clouds,  
The everlasting snows.

And Art can move,  
To higher minds, an influence as great  
As Nature's self ; when the rapt gazer  
marks  
The stainless mother folding arms  
divine  
Around the Eternal Child, or pitying  
love  
Nailed to the dreadful cross, or the  
white strength  
Of happy heathen gods, or serpent  
coils  
Binding the agonized limbs, till from  
their pain  
Is born a thing of beauty for all time.

And more than Nature, more than Art  
can move  
The awakened soul—heroic soaring  
deeds ;  
When the young champion falls in  
hopeless fight,  
Striking for home ; or when, by truth  
constrained,  
The martyr goes forth cheerful to his  
fate—  
The dungeon, or the torture, or, more  
hard,  
The averted gaze of friends, the loss of  
love,

The loneliness of soul, which truth too  
oft  
Gives to reward the faith which casts  
aside  
All things for her ; or saintly lives  
obscure,  
Spent in a sweet compassion, till they  
gain,  
Living, some glow of heaven ; or pas-  
sionate love,  
Bathing our poor world in a mystic  
light,  
Seen once, then lost for ever. These  
can stir  
Life to its depths, till silence grows a  
load  
Too hard to bear, and the rapt soul  
would fain  
Speak with strange tongues which  
startle as they come,  
Like the old saints who spake at  
Pentecost.

But we are dumb, we are dumb, and  
may not tell  
What stirs within us, though the soul  
may throb  
And tremble with its passion, though  
the heart  
Dissolve in weeping : dumb. Nature  
may spread  
Sublimest sights of beauty ; Art in-  
spire  
High thoughts and pure of God-like  
sacrifice ;  
Yet no word comes. Heroic daring  
deeds  
Thrill us, yet no word comes ; we are  
dumb, we are dumb,  
Save that from finer souls at times may  
rise,  
Once in an age, faint inarticulate  
sounds,

Low halting tones of wonder, such as  
 come  
 From children looking on the stars, but  
 still  
 With power to open to the listening  
 ear  
 The Fair Divine Unknown, and to  
 unseal  
 Heaven's inner gates before us ever-  
 more.

Ah, few and far between! The earth  
 grows green,  
 Art's glorious message speaks from year  
 to year,  
 Great deeds and high are done from  
 day to day,  
 But the voice comes not which has  
 power to wake  
 The sleeping soul within, and animate  
 The beauty which informs them, lend-  
 ing speech  
 To what before was dumb. They  
 come, they go,  
 Those sweet impressions spent on sepa-  
 rate souls,  
 Like raindrops on the endless ocean-  
 plains,  
 Lost as they fall. The world rolls on;  
 lives spring,  
 Blossom, and fade; the play of life is  
 played  
 More vivid than of old—a wider stage,  
 With more consummate actors; yet  
 the dull,  
 Cold deeps of sullen silence swallow up  
 The strain, and it is lost. But if we  
 might  
 Paint all things as they are, find voice  
 to speak  
 The thoughts now mute within us, let  
 the soul  
 Trace on its sensitive surface vividly,

As does the sun our features, all the  
 play  
 Of passion, all the changeful tides of  
 thought,  
 The mystery, the beauty, the delight,  
 The fear, the horror, of our lives,—our  
 being  
 Would blaze up heavenward in a sud-  
 den flame,  
 Spend itself, and be lost.

Wherefore 'tis well  
 This narrow boundary that hedges in  
 The strong and weak alike. Thought  
 could not live,  
 Nor speech, in that pure æther which  
 girds round  
 Life's central dwelling-place. Only  
 the dull  
 And grosser atmosphere of earth it is  
 Which vibrates to the sweet birds' song,  
 and brings  
 Heaven to the wondering ear. Only  
 the stress,  
 The pain, the hope, the longing, the  
 constraint  
 Of limited faculties circling round and  
 round  
 The grim circumference, and finding  
 naught  
 Of outlet to the dread unknown be-  
 yond,  
 Can lend the poet voice. Only the  
 weight,  
 The dulness of our senses, which makes  
 dumb  
 And hushes half the finer utterance,  
 Makes possible the song, and modulates  
 The too exalted music, that it falls  
 So soft upon the listening soul, that  
 life,  
 Not withered by the awful harmony,  
 Nor drunk with too much sweetness,  
 nor struck blind

By the too vivid presence of the  
 Unknown,  
 Fulfils its round of duty—elevated,  
 Not slain by too much splendour—  
 comforted,  
 Not thunder-smitten—soothed, not laid  
 asleep—  
 And ever, through the devious maze of  
 being,  
 Fares in slow narrowing cycles to the  
 end.

### FAITH WITHOUT SIGHT.

No angel comes to us to tell  
 Glad news of our beloved dead ;  
 Nor at the old familiar board,  
 They sit among us, breaking bread.

Three days we wait before the tomb,  
 Nay, life-long years ; and yet no  
 more,  
 For all our passionate tears, we find  
 The stone rolled backward from the  
 door.

Yet are they risen as He is risen ;  
 For no eternal loss we grieve.  
 Blessed are they who ask no sign,  
 And, never having seen, believe.

### CAGED.

ALAS for fame ! I saw a genius sit,  
 Draining full bumpers with a trem-  
 bling hand,  
 And roll out rhapsodies of folly, lit  
 By soaring fancies hard to under-  
 stand.

Lonely he seemed, whom all men  
 should admire ;  
 And some were there who sneered a  
 covert sneer,  
 Quenching with logic cold the sacred  
 fire ;  
 And one who hardly checked a rising  
 tear

Because life's order binds with chains  
 of steel  
 The struggling individual soul ;  
 because  
 The fair fine flower of life doth oft  
 conceal  
 A hidden worm which always frets  
 and gnaws  
 The inner heart from which all perfumes  
 come,  
 And round the deep-set core of  
 golden fire  
 Foul creeping creatures make their  
 constant home—  
 Black hatred, wild revolt, and gross  
 desire.

What is this bar that Nature loves to  
 place  
 Before the too aspiring heart and  
 brain,—  
 Bringing down goodly hopes to deep  
 disgrace,  
 Keeping high pleasure balanced by  
 low pain,  
 Pure thoughts by secret failings, subtler  
 joys  
 With grosser sense or hopeless depths  
 of woe,—  
 Setting our lives in barren counter-  
 poise,  
 Which says, Thus far, no further  
 shalt thou go.

Is it that Nature, envious of her own,  
 Even as the fabled gods of primal  
 years,  
 Because to too great stature it is  
 grown,  
 Hates her consummate work, and  
 inly fears  
 Lest the soul, once enfranchised, soar  
 too high,  
 Up to some Spiritual place of Souls,  
 Where the world's feeble echoes faint  
 and die,  
 And in fine waves a purer ether  
 rolls?

There is no infinite in Nature. All  
 Is finite, set within a self-made  
 bound.  
 Thought builds round space itself a  
 brazen wall,  
 And hates the barren cycle's endless  
 round.  
 Life grown too perfect is not life at all ;  
 Some hidden discords sweeten every  
 strain ;  
 No virtue is, where is no power to fall,  
 Nor true delight without a touch of  
 pain.

And this it is that limits evermore  
 The life of man to this its low estate,  
 And gives the soul's light pinions power  
 to soar  
 Only a little space toward heaven's  
 gate.  
 Creatures we are of the earth, and not  
 the sky,  
 Bound down, constrained, confined ;  
 and yet 'tis well :  
 No angel's wings are ours to mount on  
 high,  
 No chains have power to keep our  
 souls in hell.

And since to realms of thought we may  
 aspire,  
 Higher than these in which we  
 breathe and are,  
 And know within the same creative  
 fire  
 As that which lights and warms the  
 furthest star,  
 So should our restless spirits grow con-  
 tent  
 With what is theirs, nor covet to be  
 free ;  
 Since boundless power is oft most im-  
 potent,  
 And narrow bonds the truest liberty.

## TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE.

OH, if we had but eyes to see  
 The glory which around us lies,  
 To read the secrets of the earth,  
 And know the splendours of the  
 skies ;

And if we had but ears to hear  
 The psalm of life which upward rolls  
 From desert tent and city street,  
 From every meeting-place of souls ;

And if we had but tongues to tell  
 The dumb thoughts that shall ne'er  
 be heard,  
 The inarticulate prayers which rise  
 From hearts by passionate yearnings  
 stirred,—

Our souls would parch, like Semele's,  
 When her dread Lord blazed forth  
 confessed.

Ah, sometimes too much knowledge  
 blights,  
 And ignorance indeed is blest !

## ON A FLIGHT OF LADY-BIRDS.

OVER the summer sea,  
 Floating on delicate wings,  
 Comes an unnumbered host  
 Of beautiful fragile things ;  
 Whence they have come, or what  
 Blind impulse has forced them  
 here,  
 What still voice marshalled them out  
 Over wide seas without fear,  
 You cannot tell, nor I.

But to-day the air is thick  
 With these strangers from far  
 away :  
 On hot piers and drifting ships  
 The weary travellers stay.  
 On the sands where to-night they  
 will drown,  
 On the busy waterside street,  
 Trampled in myriads down  
 By the careless wayfarers' feet  
 The beautiful creatures lie.

Who knows what myriads have sunk  
 To drown in the oily waves,  
 Till all our sea-side world shows  
 Like a graveyard crowded with  
 graves ?  
 Humble creatures and small,  
 How shall the Will which sways  
 This enormous unresting ball,  
 Through endless cycles of days,  
 Take thought for them or care ?

And yet, if the greatest of kings,  
 With the wisest of sages com-  
 bined,  
 Never could both devise—  
 Strong arm and inventive mind—

So wondrous a shining coat,  
 Such delicate wings and free,  
 As have these small creatures which  
 float  
 Over the breathless sea  
 On this summer morning so fair.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 And the life, the wonderful life,  
 Which not all the wisdom of earth  
 Can give to the humblest creature  
 that moves  
 The mystical process of birth—  
 The nameless principle which doth  
 lurk  
 Far away beyond atom, or monad,  
 or cell,  
 And is truly His own most marvel-  
 lous work—  
 Was it good to give it, or, given,  
 well  
 To squander it thus away ?

For surely a man might think  
 So precious a gift and grand—  
 God's essence in part—should he  
 meted out  
 With a thrifty and grudging hand.  
 And hard by, on the yellowing  
 corn,  
 Myriads of tiny jaws  
 Are bringing the husbandman's  
 labour to scorn,  
 And the cankerworm frets and  
 gnaws,  
 Which was made for these for a  
 prey.

For a prey for these ? but, oh !  
 Who shall read us the riddle of  
 life—  
 The prodigal waste, which naught  
 can redress  
 But a cycle of sorrow and strife,

The continual sequence of pain,  
 The perpetual triumph of wrong,  
 The whole creation in travail to make  
 A victory for the strong,  
 And not with frail insects alone?

For is not the scheme worked out  
 Among us who are raised so high?  
 Are there no wasted minds among  
 men—

No hearts that aspire and sigh  
 For the hopes which the years steal  
 away,  
 For the labour they love, and its  
 meed of fame,  
 And feel the bright blade grow rusted  
 within,

Or are born to inherited shame,  
 And a portion with those that groan?

How are we fettered and caged  
 Within our dark prison-house  
 here!

We are made to look for a loving  
 plan;

We find everywhere sorrow and  
 fear.

We look for the triumph of Good;  
 And, from all the wide world  
 around,

The lives that are spent cry upward  
 to heaven,

From the slaughter-house of the  
 ground,

Till we feel that Evil is lord.

And yet are we bound to believe,

Because all our nature is so,

In a Ruler touched by an infinite  
 ruth

For all His creatures below.

Bound, though a mocking fiend  
 point

To the waste, and ruin, and  
 pain—

Bound, though our souls should be  
 bowed in despair—

Bound, though wrong triumph  
 again and again,

And we cannot answer a word.

## ON AN OLD MINSTER.

OLD minster, when my years were few,  
 And life seemed endless to the boy;  
 Clear yet and vivid is the joy  
 With which I gazed and thought on  
 you.

Thin shaft and flower-wrought capital,  
 High-springing arch, and blazoned  
 pane,

Quaint gurgoyles stretching heads  
 profane,

And stately throne and carven stall.

The long nave lost in vaporous gray,  
 The mailed recumbent forms which  
 wait,

In mockery of earthly state,  
 The coming of the dreadful day.

The haunted aisles, the gathering  
 gloom,

By some stray shaft of eve made  
 fair:

The stillness of the mouldering air,  
 The faded legends of the tomb.

I loved them all. What care had I,—  
 I, the young heir of all the Past,—

That neither youth nor life might  
 last,

That all things living came to die!

The Past was spent, the Past was done,  
The Present was my own to hold ;  
Far off within a haze of gold  
Stretched the fair Future, scarce begun.

For me did pious builders rear  
Those reverend walls ; for me the  
song  
Of supplication, ages long,  
Had gone up daily, year by year.

And thus I loved you ; but to-day  
The long Past near and nearer shows ;  
Less bright, more clear, the Future  
grows,  
And all the world is growing gray.

But you scarce bear a deeper trace  
Of time upon your solemn brow ;  
No sadder, stiller, grayer now,  
Than when I loved your reverend face.

And you shall be when I am not ;  
And you shall be a thing of joy  
To many a frank and careless Loy  
When I and mine are long forgot.

Grave priests shall here with holy rage,  
Whose grandsires are as yet unborn,  
Lash, with fierce words of saintly  
scorn,  
The heats of youth, the greed of age.

Proud prelates sit on that high throne,  
Whose young forefathers drive the  
plough  
While Norman lineage nods below,  
In aged tramp or withered crone.

And white-haired traders feign to pray,  
Sunk deep in thoughts of gain and  
gold ;  
And sweet flower-faces growing old,  
Give place to fresher blooms than they.

With such new shape of creed and  
rite  
As none now living may foretell ;  
A faith of love which needs not  
hell,  
A stainless worship, pure and white.

Or, may be, some reverting change  
To the old faith of vanished days :  
The incensed air, the mystic praise,  
The barbarous ritual, quaint and  
strange.

Who knows? But they are wrong who  
say  
Man's work is brief and quickly past ;  
If you through all these centuries  
last,  
While they who built you pass away.

The wind, the rain, the sand, are slow ;  
Man fades before his work ; scant  
trace  
Time's finger findeth to efface  
Of him whom seventy years lay low.

The grass grows green awhile, and then  
Is as before ; the work he made  
Casts on his grave a reverend shade  
Through long successive lives of men.

But he ! where is he? Lo, his name  
Has vanished from his wonted place,  
Unknown his tongue, his creed, his  
race ;  
Unknown his soaring hopes of fame.

Only the creatures of the brain,—  
Just laws, wise precepts, deathless  
verse ;  
These weave a chaplet for the hearse,  
And through all change unchanged  
remain.

These will I love as age creeps on ;  
 Gray minster, these are ever young ;  
 These shall be read and loved and  
 sung  
 When every stone of you is gone.

No hands have built the monument  
 Which to all ages shall endure ;—  
 High thoughts and fancies, sweet and  
 pure,  
 Lives in the quest of goodness spent.

These, though no visible forms confine  
 Their spiritual essence fair ;  
 Are deathless as the soul they bear,  
 And, as its Maker is, divine.

*THE BITTER HARVEST.*

Who reaps the harvest of his soul,  
 And garners up thought's golden  
 grain,  
 For him in vain life's tempests rave,  
 Fate's rude shocks buffet him in vain.

The storms which shipwreck feeble  
 souls,  
 Beat harmlessly on him ; the wind,  
 Which whirls away the domes of pride,  
 Braces the sinews of his mind.

He is set within a tower of strength,  
 Beyond thick walls and cloisters  
 still ;  
 Where, as he sits, no faintest breath  
 Stirs the smooth current of his will.

He is stretched in a smiling valley,  
 where,  
 When hills are dark, the full sun  
 shines ;  
 Brings gold upon the waving fields,  
 And purple clusters on the vines.

He lies in a boundless sylvan shade,  
 While all the fields are parched  
 around ;  
 And hears a sweet bird, singing, sing-  
 ing,  
 With one clear monotone of sound.

Far, far away from the busy crowd  
 And chaffering of the mart, he stands,  
 Like a statue on a lonely hill,  
 Pondering a scroll within its hands.

Or one who, from high convent walls,  
 Looks down at eve upon the plain,  
 And sees the children at their sport,  
 And turns to chant and prayer again ;

So rich, and yet so very poor,  
 So fruitful, yet so void of fruit ;  
 Removed from human hopes and fears,  
 Far as the man is from the brute ;

So troubled, 'neath a face of calm ;  
 So bound with chains, though seem-  
 ing free ;  
 So dead, though with a name to live,  
 That it were better not to be.

*OF LOVE AND SLEEP.*

I SAW Sleep stand by an enchanted  
 wood,  
 Thick lashes drooping o'er her heavy  
 eyes :  
 Leaning against a flower-cupped tree  
 she stood,  
 The night air gently breathed with  
 slumbrous sighs.  
 Such cloak of silence o'er the world  
 was spread,  
 As on Nile sands enshrouds the mighty  
 dead.



About her birds were dumb, and blooms  
 were bowed,  
 And a thick heavy sweetness filled  
 the air ;  
 White robed she seemed ; and hidden  
 as in a cloud,  
 A star-like jewel in her raven hair.  
 Downward to earth her cold torch  
 would she turn  
 With feeble fires that might no longer  
 burn.

And in her languid limbs and loosened  
 zone  
 Such beauty dwelt ; and in her rip-  
 pling hair,  
 As of old time was hers, and hers  
 alone,  
 The mother of gods and men divinely  
 fair ;  
 When whiter than white foam or sand  
 she lay,  
 The fairest thing beneath the eye of  
 day.

To her came Love, a comely youth and  
 strong,  
 Fair as the morning of a day in  
 June ;  
 Around him breathed a jocund air of  
 song,  
 And his limbs moved as to a joyous  
 tune :  
 With golden locks blown back, and  
 eyes aflame,  
 To where the sleeping maiden leant, he  
 came.

Then they twain passed within that  
 mystic grove  
 Together, and with them I, myself  
 unseen.

Oh, strange, sweet land ! wherein all  
 men may prove  
 The things they would, the things  
 which might have been ;  
 Hopeless hopes blossom, withered youth  
 revives,  
 And sunshine comes again to darkened  
 lives.

What sights were theirs in that blest  
 wonder-land ?  
 See, the white mountain-summits,  
 framed in cloud,  
 Redden with sunset ; while below them  
 stand  
 The solemn pine-woods like a funeral  
 crowd ;  
 And lower still the vineyards twine, and  
 make  
 A double vintage in the tranquil lake.

Or, after storm-tost nights, on some sea  
 isle  
 The sudden tropical morning bursts ;  
 and lo !  
 Bright birds and feathery palms, the  
 green hills smile,  
 Strange barks, with swarthy crews,  
 dart to and fro ;  
 And on the blue bay, glittering like a  
 crown,  
 The white domes of some fair historic  
 town.

Or, they fare northward ever, north-  
 ward still,  
 At midnight, under the unsetting  
 sun ;  
 O'er endless snows, from hill to icy  
 hill,  
 Where silence reigns with death, and  
 life is done :

Till from the North a sweet wind suddenly ;  
And hark ! the warm waves of the  
fabulous sea.

Or, some still eve, when summer days  
are long,  
And the mown hay is sweet, and  
wheat is green,  
They hear some wood-bird sing the old  
fair song  
Of joys to be, greater than yet have  
been ;  
Stretched 'neath the snowy hawthorn,  
till the star,  
Hung high in heaven, warns them that  
home is far.

Or, on the herbless, sun-struck hills, by  
night,  
Under the silent peaks, they hear the  
loud  
Wild flutes ; and onward, by the ghostly  
light,  
Whirled in nude dances, sweeps the  
maddened crowd ;  
Till the fierce eddy seize them, and they  
prove  
The shame, the rapture, of unfettered  
love.

Or, by the sacred hearth they seem to  
sit,  
While firelight gleams on many a  
sunny head ;  
At that fair hour, before the lamp is  
lit,  
When hearts are fullest, though no  
word be said,—  
When the world fades, and rank and  
wealth and fame,  
Seem, matched with this, no better  
than a name.

All these they knew ! and then a breeze  
of day  
Stirred the dark wood ; and then they  
seemed to come  
Forth with reluctant feet among the  
gray,  
Bare fields, unsavoury ; and all the  
flame  
Was burnt from out Love's eyes, and  
from his hair,  
And his smooth cheek was marked with  
lines of care.

And paler showed the maid, more pure  
and white  
And holier than before. But when I  
said,  
" Sweet eyes, be opened ; " lo, the un-  
veiled sight  
Was as the awful vision of the dead !  
Then knew I, breathing slow, with  
difficult breath,  
That Love was one with Life, and  
Sleep with Death.

## BLIND.

THE girl who from her father's door  
Sees the cold storm-cloud sweep the  
sea,  
Cries, wrestling with her anguish sore,  
My love ! my love ! ah, where is he ?  
And locks her fears within her breast,  
Sickening ; while 'neath the breath-  
less blaze  
He lies, and dreams, in broken rest,  
Of homely faces,—happier days.

But when a calm is on the deep,  
And scarcely from the quivering blue,  
The waves' soft murmur, half asleep,  
Speaks hope that he is well, and true :

The brave ship sinks to rise no more  
 Beneath the thunderous surge ; and  
     he,  
 A pale corpse floating on the sea,  
 Or dashed like seaweed on the shore.

*TO HER PICTURE.*

As one who on a lonely bed of pain  
 Feels the soft hand he felt when he  
     was young ;  
 Or, who at eve, on some far Eastern  
     plain,  
     Hears the old songs once by his  
     mother sung :  
 So to me, looking on thy portrait, dear,  
 Thou and my youth and love are ever  
     near.

It may be that the painter failed to  
     show,  
     How should he not ? the soul within  
     thine eyes,—  
 Their blue unruffled depths, thy cheeks  
     aglow  
     With virgin blushes that unbidden  
     rise ;  
 Thy coral lips, thy white neck, round,  
     and fair,  
 Or the sweet prodigal auburn of thy  
     hair.

How should he ? Not for him thou  
     wast, but me ;  
     Love shot no sudden splendour in his  
     eyes ;  
 Love guided not his hand, content to  
     see  
     Mere beauty, as of sunset-hills or  
     skies ;  
 Nor soothed his dull ear with the mystic  
     strain,  
 Heard once a life, and nevermore again.

Only the lovely shell he saw ; the cloak,  
 The perfect vesture of the hidden  
     soul.

Not for his eyes thy slumbering angel  
     woke,  
     Stretched in deep sleep, where love's  
     broad waters roll :  
 Had he but seen her wings of silver  
     move,  
 He had forgot to paint, and learned to  
     love.

Yet is his skill to me for ever blest,  
 For that which it has left of grace  
     and truth ;  
 Those sweet eyes shine, yet need no  
     time of rest,  
     Still thy fair cheek retains its rounded  
     youth.

In wakeful nights I light my lamp, and  
     know  
 The same dear face I knew long years  
     ago.

Yet worn am I, too old for love, and  
     gray.  
     Too faithful heart, thou shouldst not  
     still abide  
 With such as I, nor longer deign to stay :  
     These are the follies wiser worldlings  
     chide.

Thou wouldst transfer those glances,  
     wert thou wise,  
 To younger lives and more responsive  
     eyes.

Ah ! no, remain ; not thus you looked  
     of yore ;  
     Another, perhaps more worthy, bore  
     the prize ;  
 I could not tell you then the love I  
     bore,  
 Or read the soft requital in your  
     eyes ;

Now no change comes, now thou art  
always kind,  
Then thou wast cold and changeful as  
the wind.

THE RETURN.

HE stood above the well-known shore ;  
Behind, the sea stretched dull and  
gray :  
And slowly with the breeze of morn  
The great ship forged away.

Almost he wished she might return,  
And speed him to some further  
change ;  
The old scenes greeted him again,  
And yet all things were strange.

There were the dreams he used to dream  
In the long nights when day was  
here ;  
The shady Sunday path to church,  
The winding brooklet clear.

The woods with violets blue in Spring,  
The fallow where they chased the  
hare,  
The gable peeping through the elms,  
All filled him with despair.

For all was there except the past—  
The past, his youth for dross had  
sold !  
The past which after-years in vain  
Prize more than all their gold.

Then age fell on him with a flash,  
Time smote him, and his soul grew  
gray,  
And thoughts in busier scenes unknown,  
Chased youth and hope away.

The past, which seemed so near before,  
A step might gain it, came to be  
A low cloud sunk beyond a gulf,  
Wider than any sea.

Nor what the present had in store,  
Knowing ; at last his great suspense  
Grew to a bitter load of pain,  
Too great for mortal sense.

So, by the well-known paths at last,  
He gained the well-remembered door,  
Sick for a voice which he should hear,  
Ah ! never, never, more

Strange children round, a stranger's  
face  
Of wonder, so the dream was o'er.  
He turned ; the dead past comes not  
back.  
No, never, never, more.

FOR EVER.

For ever and for ever  
The changeless oceans roar :  
And dash their thundering surges down  
Upon the sounding shore :  
Yet this swift soul, this lightning will,  
Shall these, while they roll on, be still ?

For ever and for ever  
The eternal mountains rise,  
And lift their virgin snows on high  
To meet the silent skies.  
Yet shall this soul which measures all,  
While these stand steadfast, sink and  
fall ?

For ever and for ever  
The swift suns roll through space ;  
From age to age they wax and wane,  
Each in its ordered place :

Yet shall this soul, whose inner eye  
Foretells their cycles, fade and die ?

For ever and for ever

We have been, and we are,  
Unchanging as the ocean wave,  
Unresting as the star :  
Though suns stand still, and time be  
o'er,  
We are, and shall be, evermore.

### BEHIND THE VEIL.

I PACED along  
The dim cathedral wrapped in reverend  
gloom :  
I heard the sweet child's song  
Spring upwards like a fountain ; and  
the boom  
(Of the tempestuous organ-music swell ;  
The hushed low voices and the silvery  
bell ;  
The incense-laden air ; the kneeling  
throng :  
I knew them all, and seemed to hear  
the cry  
Of countless myriads, rising deep and  
strong,—  
Help us ! we faint, we die.  
Our knees are weak, our eyes are blind ;  
We seek what we shall never find.  
Show but Thy face, and we are Thine,  
Unknown, Ineffable, Divine !

I heard the loud  
Muezzin from the slender minaret call  
"To prayer, To prayer ;" and lo ! the  
busy crowd,  
Merchant and prince and water-carrier,  
all  
Turned from the world, and, rapt in  
worship, knelt,  
Facing the holy city ; and I felt

That from those myriads kneeling,  
prostrate, bowed,  
A low moan rises to the throne on  
high,—

Not shut out quite by error's thickest  
cloud,—

Help us ! we faint, we die.

Our knees are weak, our eyes are  
blind ;

We seek what we shall never find.

Show but Thy face, and we are Thine,  
Unknown, Ineffable, Divine.

I stood before  
The glaring temples on the burning  
plain ;

I heard the hideous roar

Rise to the stars to drown the shrieks  
of pain,

What time the murderous idol swept  
along.

I listened to the innocent, mystic song,  
Breathed to the jewelled Lotus ever-  
more,

In the elder lands, through the ages,  
like a sigh,

And heard in low, sweet chant, and  
hateful roar,—

Help us ! we faint, we die.

Our knees are weak, our eyes are blind ;  
We seek what we shall never find.

Show but Thy face, and we are Thine,  
Unknown, Ineffable, Divine !

Ay : everywhere  
Echoes the same exceeding bitter cry.

Yet can the Father bear

To hide His presence from the children's  
eye ;

Lets loose on good and bad the plague  
and sword ;

And though wrong triumph, answers  
not a word ?

Only deep down in the heart doth He  
declare

His constant presence ; there, though  
the outward sky  
Be darkened, shines a little speck of  
fair,—  
A light which cannot die.  
Though knees be weak, and eyes be  
blind ;  
Though we may seek, and never find ;  
Here doth His hidden glory shine,  
Unknown, Ineffable, Divine !

VISIONS.

ORT in the blazing summer noon,  
And oft beneath the frosty moon,  
When earth and air were hushed and  
still,  
And absolute silence seemed to fill  
The farthest border-lands of space,  
I loved in childish thought to trace  
Glimpses of change, which might trans-  
form  
The voiceless calm to furious storm ;  
Broke the dull spell, which comes to  
bind  
In after-years the sluggish mind ;  
And pictured, borne on fancy's wings,  
The end of all created things.  
Then have I seen with dreaming eye,  
The blue depths of the vaulted sky  
Rent without noise ; and in their stead  
A wonder-world of fancy spread,  
A golden city, with domes and spires,  
Lit by a strange sun's mystic fires.  
Portals of dazzling chrysolite,  
Long colonnades of purest white ;  
Streets paved with gold and jewels rare ;  
And higher, in the ambient air,  
A shining Presence undefined :  
Swift seraphs stooping swift as wind  
From pole to pole, and that vast throng  
Which peopled Dante's world of song ;

The last great inquest which shall close  
The tale of human joys and woes ;  
The dreadful Judge, the opening tomb,  
And all the mystery of doom.  
Then woke to find the vision vain,  
And sun or moon shine calm again.

No longer, save in memory's glass,  
These vanished visions come and pass ;  
The clearer light of fuller day  
Has chased these earlier dreams away.  
Faith's eye grows dim with too much  
light,

And fancy flies our clearer sight.  
But shall we mourn her day is o'er,  
That these rapt visions come no more ?  
Nay ; knowledge has its splendours  
too,

Brighter than Fancy's brightest hue.  
I gaze now on the heavens, and see  
How, midst their vast immensity,  
By cosmic laws the planets roll,  
Sped onwards by a central soul ;  
How farther still, and still more far,  
World beyond world, star beyond star,  
So many, and so far, that speech  
And thought must fail the sum to reach.  
This universe of nature teems  
With things more strange than fancy's  
dreams ;

And so at length, with clearer eye,  
Soar beyond childhood's painted sky,  
Up to the Lord of great and small,  
Not onewhere, but pervading all :  
Who made the music of the spheres,  
And yet inclines an ear that hears  
The faintest prayer, the humblest sigh,  
The strong man's groan, the childish  
cry ;

Who guides the stars, yet without whom  
No humblest floweret comes to bloom,  
No lowliest creature comes to birth,  
No dead leaf flutters to the earth :

Who breathed into our souls the breath,  
Which neither time nor change nor  
death,  
Nor hurtling suns at random hurled  
And dashed together, world on world,  
Can ever kill or quench, till He  
Bends down, and bids them not to be.

## DOUBT.

WHO but has seen  
Once in his life, when youth and health  
ran high,  
The fair, clear face of truth  
Grow dark to his eye?  
Who but has known  
Cold mists of doubt and icy questionings  
Creep round him like a nightmare,  
blotting out  
The sight of better things.

A hopeless hour,  
When all the voices of the soul are  
dumb,  
When o'er the tossing seas  
No light may come,  
When God and right  
Are gone, and seated on the empty  
throne  
Are dull philosophies and words of wind,  
Making His praise their own.

Better than this,  
The burning sins of youth, the old  
man's greed,  
Than thus to live inane;  
To sit and read,  
And with blind brain  
Daily to treasure up a deadly doubt,  
And live a life from which the light  
has fled,  
And faith's pure fire gone out.

Until at last,  
For some blest souls, but never here  
for all,  
Burns out a sudden light,  
And breaks the thrall,  
And doubt has fled,  
And the soul rises, with a clearer sight  
For this its pain, its sorrow, its despair,  
To God and truth and right.

Plead we for those  
Gently and humbly, as befitteth men  
On whom the same chill shade  
Broods now as then.  
So shall they learn  
How an eternal wisdom rules above,  
And all the cords of Being are  
bound fast  
To an unfailing love.

## ST. DAVID'S HEAD.

SALT sprays deluge it, wild waves buffet it, hurricanes rave;  
Summer and winter, the depths of the ocean girdle it round;  
In leaden dawns, in golden noon-tides, in silvery moonlight;  
Never it ceases to hear the old sea's mystical sound.

Surges vex it evermore  
By gray cave and sounding shore.

Think of the numberless far-away centuries, long before man,  
When the hot earth with monsters teemed, and with monsters the deep,  
And the red sun loomed faint, and the moon was caught fast in the motionless air,  
And the warm waves seethed through the haze in a secular sleep.

Rock was here and headland then,  
Ere the little lives of men.

Over it long the mastodons crashed through the tropical forest,  
And the great bats swooped overhead through the half-defined blue ;  
Then they passed, and the hideous ape-man, speechless and half-erect,  
Through weary ages of time tore and gibbered and slew.

Grayer skies and chiller air,  
But the self-same rock was there.

Then the savage came and went, and Briton and Roman and Saxon,  
Till our England grew rich and great, and her white sails covered the sea ;  
Thus through all this long story of ours, civil progress and vanquished foeman,  
From Crecy to Trafalgar, from the bondsman down to the free,

Still those dark rocks, and beneath  
Keeps the sea its face of death.

So it shall be when the tide of our greatness has ebbed to the shallows ;  
So when there floats not a ship on this storm-tossed westerly main,  
Hard by, the minster crumbles, the city has shrunk to a village ;  
Thus shall we shrink one day, and our forests be pathless again ;

And the headland stern shall stand,  
Guarding an undiscovered land.

Vex it, O changeless ocean ; rave round it, tempests unceasing ;  
Sink it, great earthquakes, deep in the depths of the fathomless sea ;  
Burn them, fierce fires of the centre, burn rock and ocean together,  
Till the red globe flare throughout space, through the ages to be.

Cease, make an end, dull world, begone .  
How shall I cease while you roll on ?

Time, oh, horrible ! Space, oh, terrible ! Infinite Void !  
Dreadful abysses of Being ! blighting a finite brain ;  
How shall the creatures of thought subsist, when the thinker ceases ?  
Begone, dull figments, be done ! not alone shall you dare to remain.

Without me you yourselves must fall ;  
I hold the measure of you all.



*IN VOLHYNIA.*

IN Volhynia the peasant mothers,  
 When spring-time brings back the  
 leaves,  
 And the first swallows dart and twitter  
 Under the cottage eaves,—

Sit mute at their windows, and listen,  
 With eyes brimming over with tears,  
 To the broken sounds which are wafted  
 To their eager watching ears.

And throw out bread and honey  
 To the birds as they scintillate by ;  
 And hearts full of yearning and longing,  
 Borne out on the wings of a sigh.

For they think that their dear lost  
 children,  
 The little ones who are gone,  
 Come back thus to the heartsick  
 mothers  
 Who are toiling and sorrowing on.

And those sun-lit wings and flashing  
 White breasts, to their tear-dimmed  
 eyes  
 Bring visions of white child-angels  
 Floating in Paradise.

And again to the sounds they hearken,  
 Which grew silent while incomplete,  
 The music of childish laughter,  
 The patter of baby feet.

Till the hearts which are barren and  
 childless,  
 The homes which are empty and  
 cold :  
 The nests whence the young have de-  
 parted,  
 Are filled with young life as of old.

Thus each spring, to those peasant  
 mothers,

Comes the old Past again and again ;  
 And those sad hearts quicken and  
 blossom,  
 In a rapture of sorrowless pain.

*THE LIVING PAST.*

O FAITHFUL souls that watch and  
 yearn,

Expectant of the coming light,  
 With kindling hearts and eyes that burn  
 With hope to see the rule of right ;

The time of peace and of good will,  
 When the thick clouds of wrong and  
 pain

Roll up as from a shining hill,  
 And never more descend again ;

The perfect day, the golden year,  
 The end of sorrow and of sighs ;  
 Whether the heavenly change be here,  
 Or far beyond the sunset skies,—

I cherish you, I love your faith,  
 I long with you that this may be ;  
 But hark, a dreary voice which saith,  
 "Vain dreamer, what were it to thee!"

For though the blest hour strike before  
 Another sunrise vex the earth,  
 And pain and evil rule no more,  
 But vanish in the newer birth,—

Though war and hatred come to cease,  
 And sorrow be no more, nor sin,  
 And in their stead an endless peace  
 Its fair unbroken reign begin,—

What comfort have ye? What shall blot  
 The memories of bitter years,

Of joys which have been, but are not,  
And floods of unforgotten tears ?

The painful records graven clear  
On carven rock or deathless page ;  
The long unceasing reign of fear,  
The weary tale of lust and rage ;

The ills whose dark sum baffles thought,  
Done day by day beneath the sun ?  
"That which is done," the old sage  
taught,  
"Not God Himself can make un-  
done."

For that which has been, still must live,  
And 'neath the shallow Present last.  
Oh, who will sweet oblivion give,  
Who free us from the dreadful Past ?

CHANGES.

You see that tall house opposite ?  
Three times within the fleeting year,  
Since last the summer-time was here,  
Great changes have gone over it.

For first a bridal bright and gay  
Filled the long street with riotous  
sound ;  
And amid smiles from all around,  
The newly-wedded passed away.

And when the violets came once more,  
And lambs were born, a concourse  
went,  
Still gayer, still more innocent,  
To christening from that stately door.

And now the mute house dull and drear,  
From blinded eyes, stares blank and  
white ;  
And amid dust and glaring light,  
The black lines slowly disappear.

ALONE.

WHAT shall it profit a man  
To have stood by the source of things,  
To have spent the fair years of his  
youthful prime

In mystical questionings ;  
To have scaled the lovely height,  
While his brothers slept below ;  
To have seen the vision bright  
Which but few on earth may know,—  
If when his task be done  
He lives his life alone ?  
If in the busy street  
None come whom he may greet ?  
If in his lonely room  
With the night the shadows deepen into  
ghostly shapes of gloom ?

It may be his soul may say,  
"I have gained me a splendid dower ;  
I can look around on the toiling  
crowd,  
With the pride of a conscious power.  
I can hear the passer-by  
Tell of all my world-wide fame ;  
I have friends I shall not see  
Who dwell fondly on my name.  
If the sweet smile of wife  
Light not my joyless life,  
If to my silent home  
No childish laughter come,  
Shall I no solace find  
In communion with the monarchs of the  
fair broad realm of mind ?"

But when sickness wears him, or age  
Creeps on, and his soul doth yearn  
For the tender hand and the soothing  
voice

That shall never more return  
 When the lessening throng of friends,  
 Not unkind, but each one set  
 Safe within white walls of home,  
 All the world without forget,—  
 Shall not old memories rise  
 'Twixt book and weary eyes,  
 Till knowledge come to seem  
 A profitless vague dream?  
 Shall not he sometimes sigh  
 For the careless past unlearned, and  
     the happy days gone by?

Ah! not to be happy alone,  
 Are men sent, or to be glad.  
 Oft-times the sweetest music is made  
 By the voices of the sad.  
 The thinker oft is bent  
 By a too-great load of thought;  
 The discoverer's soul grows sick  
 With the secret vainly sought:  
 Lonely may be the home,  
 No breath of fame may come,  
 Yet through their lives doth shine  
 A purple light Divine,  
 And a nobler pain they prove  
 Than the bloom of lower pleasures, or  
     the fleeting spell of love.

### SEA VOICES.

PEACE, moaning Sea; what tale have  
     you to tell?  
 What mystic tidings, all unknown  
     before?  
 Whether you break in thunder on  
     the shore,  
 Or whisper like the voice within the  
     shell,  
 O moaning Sea, I know your burden  
     well.

'Tis but the old dull tale, filled full of  
     pain;  
 The finger on the dial-plate of time,  
 Advancing slow with pitiless beat  
     sublime,  
 As stoops the day upon the fading  
     plain;  
 And that has been which may not be  
     again.

The voice of yearning, deep but scarce  
     expressed,  
 For something which is not, but may  
     be yet;  
 Too full of sad continuance to forget,  
 Too troubled with desires to be at rest,  
 Too self-conflicting ever to be blest.

The voice of hopes and aspirations  
     high,  
 Swallowed in sand, or shivered on  
     the rock;  
 Tumultuous life dashed down with  
     sudden shock;  
 And passionate protests, narrowed to a  
     sigh,  
 From hearts too weak to live,—too  
     strong to die.

The voice of old beliefs which long  
     have fled.  
 Gone with a shriek, and leaving  
     naught behind,  
 But some vague utterance, cold as  
     wintry wind,—  
 Some dim remembrance of a ghostly  
     dread  
 Which lingers still when faith itself is  
     dead.

And, above all, through thund'rous  
     wintry roar,  
 And summer ripple, this, and this  
     alone,

For ever do I make this barren  
moan:—  
No end, there is no end,—on 'Time's  
dull shore  
I wail, I beat, I thunder, evermore.

BERLIN, 1871.

THE spring day was all of a flutter  
with flags;  
The mad chimes were beating like  
surf in the air;  
The beggars had slunk out of sight with  
their rags;  
And the balconies teemed with the  
rich and the fair.

And below, on each side, the long  
vistas were set  
In a frame-work of faces, patient and  
white,—  
Wives, mothers, sweethearts, with full  
eyes wet,  
And sick hearts longing to see the  
sight.

Till at length, when the evening was  
waning, there ran  
A stir through the crowd, and far-off,  
like a flame,  
The setting sun burned on the helms  
of the van,  
And with trampling of hoofs the  
proud conquerors came.

And with every step they advanced,  
you might hear  
Women's voices, half-maddened with  
long-deferred joy:  
"Thank God! he is safe. See, my  
love, we are here!  
See! here am I, darling; and this  
is our boy!"

Or, "Here am I, dearest, still faithful  
and true;  
Your own love as of old!" Or an  
agonised cry,  
As the loved face came not with the  
comrades she knew  
And the rough soldiers found not a  
word to reply.

And pitiful hands led her softly away,  
With a loving heart rent and broken  
in twain;  
And the triumph sweeps onward, in  
gallant array,—  
The life and the hope, the despair  
and the pain.

Where was it? In Egypt, Assyria,  
Greece, Rome?  
Ages since, or to-day; in the old  
world, or new?  
Who shall tell? From all time these  
strange histories come;  
And to-day, as of old, the same story  
is true.

And the long line sweeps past, and  
the dull world rolls on  
Though the rapture is dead and the  
sad tears are dry,  
And careless of all, till the progress be  
done,  
Life rides like a conqueror triumph-  
ing by.

THE BEACON.

FAIR shines the beacon from its lonely  
rock,  
Stable alone amid the unstable  
waves:

In vain the surge leaps with continual  
shock,  
In vain around the wintry tempest  
raves,  
And ocean thunders in her sounding  
caves.

For here is life within the gate of death,  
Calm light and warmth amid the  
storm without ;  
Here sleeping love breathes with un-  
troubled breath,  
And faith, clear-eyed, pierces the  
clouds of doubt  
And monstrous depths which com-  
pass her about.

So calm, so pure, yet prisoned and  
confined ;  
Fenced by white walls from pleasure  
as from pain.  
Not always glooms the sea or shrieks  
the wind :  
Sometimes light zephyrs curl the  
azure main,  
And the sweet sea-nymphs glide  
with all their train.

Or Aphrodite rises from the foam,  
And lies all rosy on the golden sand,  
And o'er the purple plains the Nereids  
roam ;  
Sweet laughter comes, borne from  
the joyous band,  
And faint sweet odours from the  
far-off land.

And straightway the impatient soul  
within  
Loathes its white house which to a  
jail doth turn ;  
Careless of true or false, of right or  
sin,

Careless of praying hands or eyes  
that burn,  
Or aught that sense can feel or mind  
discern.

Knowing but this,—that the unknown  
is blest,  
Holding delight of free untrammelled  
air :  
Delight of toil sweeter than any rest,  
Fierce storms with cores of calm for  
those who dare  
Black rayless nights than fairest  
noons more fair.

And drifting forth at eve in some frail  
boat,  
Beholds the old light, like a setting  
star,  
Sink in the sea, and still doth fare and  
float  
Adown the night till day-break shows  
afar,—  
And hark the faint low thunders of  
the bar.

Nor if indeed he reach the Blessed Isle,  
Nor if those pitiless crests shall  
plunge him down,  
Knows he ; but whether breathless  
azure smile,  
Or furious night and horrible tem-  
pests frown,  
Living or dying, Freedom wears a  
crown.

### THE GARDEN OF REGRET.

BEYOND the dim walls of the shadowy  
Past,  
A sweet vague host of fancies  
flourishes,

Like garden seeds in some rough  
hollow cast,  
Which all unasked the kind earth  
nourishes,  
And sends up tender blooms more  
sweet and fair  
Than the dull Present rears with all its  
care.

There on its thin stem hangs the frail  
white flower;  
Far sweeter now she shines within  
the shade,  
Than when of old within the trim-kept  
bower  
And perfumed lush parterres her  
home she made;  
Because her sister blooms are past and  
gone,  
And this alone it is that lingers on.

The same white flower,—but oh, the  
depths of change!  
Before, the creamy petals, broad and  
strong,  
Were all adust with gold, and filled  
with strange  
Sweet scents, which lurked the  
odorous depths among;  
Deep in her honeyed wells, the bee  
would stay  
Content, and birds sing round the live-  
long day.

The same white flower—yet changed in  
scent and hue.  
Now the fair feeble petals curl and  
shrink;  
The dead smooth surfaces are veined  
with blue;  
No honeyed draughts they hold for  
bee to drink,

Nor busy hum, nor joyous song is  
heard.  
What hath she left to charm or bee or  
bird?

Only a faint sweet odour lingers yet,  
Dearer than those rich scents of  
former years:  
A fragile fairness, fairer through regret,  
And watered by the dewy fount of  
tears.  
To me that outcast flower is dearer  
grown,  
Than when in those fair gardens over-  
blown.

I set her in the garden of my heart,  
And water her from life's sincerest  
spring;  
And lo! once more the frail stems  
quicken and start,  
Fair honeyed blooms arise and blithe  
birds sing:  
The old sweet flower in scent and  
gorgeous hue,  
But not the tender grace that once I  
knew.

Alas! not in the Present will she  
grow:  
The Present has its own blooms  
sweet and bright;  
Within its four walls life's fair pleasures  
blow,  
And each gay season brings its own  
delight:  
Far off in dewy shades the exile sweet  
Grows fair, and paths untrodden by  
living feet.

There let her stay. I know not if my  
theme  
Be love, or some fair child of heart  
or mind:

Young friendships, hopes, beliefs,  
 which like a dream  
 Pass from us leaving some sweet  
 ghost behind.

Leave them behind, they have been ;  
 others are,  
 And shall be. Lo ! the spring time is  
 not far.

## SECOND SERIES (1874).

## TO AN UNKNOWN POET.\*

DEAR friend, who, two long centuries  
 ago,  
 Didst tread where since my grandsires  
 trod,  
 Along thy devious Usk's untroubled  
 flow,  
 Breathing thy soul to God.

I seek, I, born in these our later days,  
 Using the measure thou didst love,  
 With halting tribute of too tardy praise,  
 A poet throned above.

I in the self-same venerable halls  
 And gray quadrangles made my  
 home,  
 Which heard, new-built, within their  
 recent walls,  
 Thy youthful footsteps come.

A little grayer now and stiller grown,  
 The tranquil refuge now, as then,  
 Where our dear country glories in her  
 own,  
 Apart from alien men.

There, on thy musings broke the painful  
 sound  
 Of arms ; the long-plumed cavaliers  
 Clanged thro' the courts—the low fat  
 fields around  
 Were filled with strife and tears.

\* Henry Vaughan, the Silurist, died near  
 Brecon, 1695.

Constrained by promptings of thy  
 ancient race,  
 Thy gown and books thou flungst  
 away,  
 To meet the sturdy Roundhead face to  
 face  
 On many a hard-fought day,

Till thy soft soul grew sick, and thou  
 didst turn  
 To our old hills ; and there, ere  
 long,  
 Love for thy Amoret, at times, would  
 burn  
 In some too servid song.

But soon thy wilder pulses stayed, and,  
 life  
 Grown equable, thy sweet muse mild,  
 Sobered by tranquil love of child and  
 wife,  
 Flowed pure and undefiled.

A humble healer thro' a life obscure,  
 Thou didst expend thy homely days ;  
 Sweet Swan of Usk ! few know how  
 clear and pure  
 Are thy unheeded lays.

One poet shall become a household  
 name  
 Into the nation's heart ingrown ;  
 One more than equal miss the meed of  
 fame,  
 And live and die unknown.

So thou, surviving in thy lonely age,  
All but thy own undying love  
Didst pour upon the sympathetic page,  
Words which all hearts can move—

} So quaintly fashioned as to add a grace  
To the sweet fancies which they bear,  
Even as a bronze delved from some  
ancient place  
I or very rust shows fair.

' They all are gone into the world of  
light !'  
It is thy widowed muse that sings,  
And then mounts upward from our  
dazzled sight  
On heavenward soaring wings

"He that hath found some fledged  
bird's nest may know"

"At first sight if the bird be flown,"

"But what fair dell or grove he sings in  
now,"

"That is to him unknown"

"And yet, as angels in some brighter  
dreams"

' Call to the soul when man doth  
sleep,"

"So some strange thoughts transcend  
our wonted themes,"

"And into glory peep"

"O father of eternal life and all

"Created glories under Thee !"

"Resume Thy Spirit from this world of  
thrall"

"Into true liberty."

\* \* \*

Thou hast rejoined thy dear ones now,  
and art,

Dear soul, as then thou wouldst be,  
free.

I, still a prisoner, strive to do my part  
In memory of thee.

Thou art so high, and yet unknown  
shall I

Repine that I too am obscure?

Nay, what care I, though all my verse  
shall die,

If only it is pure?

So some new singer of the days to be,  
Reading this page with soft young  
eyes,

Shall note the tribute which I pay to  
thee

With youth's sweet frank surprise.

And musing in himself, perchance shall  
say,

"Two bards whom centuries part are  
here—

One whose high fame and name defy  
decay,

And one who held him dear."

## COMFORT.

I ho' love be bought and honour sold,

I he sunset keeps its glow of gold,

And round the rosy summits cold

I he white clouds hover, fold on fold

I ho' over ripe the nations rot,

I ho' right be dead and faith forgot,

Tho' one dull cloud the heavens may  
blot,

The tender leaf delayeth not.

Tho' all the world lie sunk in ill,

The bounteous autumns mellow still,

By virgin sand and sea-worn hill

I The constant waters ebb and fill.



From out the throng and stress of lies,  
 From out the painful noise of sighs,  
 One voice of comfort seems to rise :  
 " It is the meaner part that dies."

SONG.

If ever, dear,  
 I might at last the barren victory gain,  
 After long struggle and laborious pain,  
 And many a secret tear,  
 To think, since think I must of thee,  
 Not otherwise than thou of me.

Haply I might  
 Thy chilling coldness, thy disdain, thy  
 pride,  
 Which draw me, half reluctant, to thy  
 side,

With a like meed requite,  
 And I my too fond self despise,  
 Seeing with disenchanted eyes.

But now, alas !  
 So fast a prisoner am I to my love,  
 No power there is that can my chains  
 remove,

So sweet the caged hours pass,  
 That, if it parted me from thee,  
 I would not willingly grow free.

Nor would I dare  
 To ask for recompense of love again,  
 Who love thee for the height of thy  
 disdain.

Thou wouldst not show so fair  
 If we should own an equal flame,  
 Unequal souls, in love the same.

Full well I know  
 That what I worship is not wholly thee,  
 But a fair dream, a pious fantasy.  
 Such as at times doth grow

On yearnings of the cloistered mind,  
 Or the rapt vision of the blind.

Scorn me then, sweet,  
 I would not thou shouldst leave thy  
 lofty place,  
 Thy lover should not see thee face to  
 face,  
 But prostrate at thy feet.  
 No recompense, no equal part I seek,  
 Only that thou be strong and I be  
 weak.

OH, SNOWS SO PURE!

OH, snows so pure ! oh, peaks so high !  
 I lift to you a hopeless eye.

I see your icy ramparts drawn  
 Between the sleepers and the dawn.

I see you, when the sun has set,  
 Flush with the dying daylight yet.

I see you, passionless and pure,  
 Above the lightnings stand secure ;

But may not climb, for now the hours  
 Are spring's, and earth a maze of  
 flowers.

And now, 'mid summer's dust and heat,  
 I stay my steps for childish feet.

And now, when autumn glows, I fear  
 To lose the harvest of the year.

Now winter frowns, and life runs slow,  
 Even on the plains I tread thro' snow.

While you are veiled, or, dimly seen,  
 Only reveal what might have been ;

And where high hope would once aspire  
Broods a vast storm-cloud dealing fire.

Oh, snows so pure ! oh, peaks so high !  
I shall not reach you till I die !

*THE BEGINNINGS OF FAITH.*

ALL travail of high thought,  
All secrets vainly sought,  
All struggles for right, heroic, perpetually fought.

Faint gleams of purer fire,  
Conquests of gross desire,  
Whereby the fettered soul ascends continually higher.

Sweet cares for love or friend  
Which ever heavenward tend,  
Too deep and true and tender to have  
on earth their end.

Vile hearts malign and fell,  
Lives which no tongue may tell,  
So dark and dread and shameful that  
they breathe a present hell.

White mountain, deep-set lake,  
Sea wastes which surge and break,  
Fierce storms which, roaring from the  
north, the midnight forests shake.

Fair morns of summer days,  
Rich harvest eves that raise  
The soul and heart o'erburdened to an  
ecstasy of praise.

Low whispers, vague and strange,  
Which through our being range,  
Breathing perpetual presage of some  
mighty coming change.

These in the soul do breed  
Thoughts which, at last, shall lead  
To some clear, firm assurance of a satisfying creed.

*A MEMORY.*

DOWN dropped the sun upon the sea,  
The gradual darkness filled the land.  
And 'mid the twilight, silently,  
I felt the pressure of a hand.

And a low voice : "Have courage,  
friend.

Be of good cheer, 'tis not for long ;  
He conquers who awaits the end,  
And dares to suffer and be strong."

I have seen many a land since then,  
Known many a joy and many a pain.  
Victor in many a strife of men,  
Vanquished again and yet again.

The ancient sorrow now is not,  
Since time can heal the keenest smart ;  
Yet the vague memory, scarce forgot,  
Lingers deep down within the heart.

Still, when the ruddy flame of gold  
Fades into gray on sea and land,  
I hear the low sweet voice of old,  
I feel the pressure of a hand.

*THE NEW ORDER.*

THE old lives are dead and gone and  
rotten,

The old thoughts shall never more  
be thought,

The old faiths have failed and are  
forgotten,

The old strifes are done, the fight is  
fought.

And with a clang and roll, the new  
creation  
Bursts forth 'mid tears and blood and  
tribulation.

Sweet they were, the old days that are  
ended,  
The golden years, the happy careless  
hours  
Then, like Pagan gods on the asphodel  
extended,  
Dreaming, men wove them fancies  
fair as flowers.  
Love laid near them, Art to cheer them,  
youthful Beauty  
Sitting crowned upon the marble throne  
of Duty.

All good things were theirs to cherish  
—lives grown finer  
From the heritage of long ancestral  
ease,  
And a nobler port, and temperate mien  
diviner  
Than their labours and their vigils  
leave to these ;  
Gentler voices, smiles more gracious,  
and the fashion  
Of their soft lives tuned to pity and  
compassion.

Naught men knew of science, now  
grown rigid  
With its teaching of inexpiable sin :  
Nor the dull pedantic gospel, dead and  
frigid,  
Of a heaven where mind alone may  
enter in,  
Doom awaiting, stern and silent, all  
transgression,  
And no saint with power to make an  
intercession.

For a Ruler, as men thought they saw  
above them,  
More than earthly rulers, pitiful and  
mild,  
A Father with a stronger love to love  
them  
Than the love an earthly father bears  
his child—  
God above them, and for pleader and  
defender  
Christ's face stooping, like his mother's,  
true and tender.

But now there seems no place for the  
Creator  
To hold his long unbroken chain of  
law,  
Nor any need for heaven-sent Mediator,  
Nor the Providence our fathers  
thought they saw.  
Only a dull world-system, always tend-  
ing  
To a blind goal, by a blind rule  
unbending.

And for the courtesy and tender graces,  
The chivalries and charities of old,  
A dull and equal arrogance effaces  
Soft sympathies by hard demands and  
cold ;  
And the giver giveth not, lest any  
blame him,  
And the taker may not take, lest taking  
shame him.

Be still, oh ye of little faith, repining  
That the purpose of the Eternal will  
is dead.  
The silent stars forget not yet their  
shining,  
Daily the full sun journeys over-  
head.

How shall mind's realm alone forget  
its reason,  
When the sure years roll season after  
season?

There shall rise from this confused  
sound of voices

A firmer faith than that our fathers  
knew,  
A deep religion, which alone rejoices  
In worship of the Infinitely True,  
Not built on rite or portent, but a finer  
And purer reverence for a Lord diviner.

There shall come from out this noise of  
strife and groaning

A broader and a juster brotherhood,  
A deep equality of aim, postponing  
All selfish seeking to the general good.  
There shall come a time when each  
shall to another  
Be as Christ would have him—brother  
unto brother.

There shall come a time when know-  
ledge wide extended,

Sinks each man's pleasure in the  
general health,  
And all shall hold irrevocably blended  
The individual and the common-  
wealth,

When man and woman in an equal union  
Shall merge, and marriage be a true  
communion.

There shall come a time when brother-  
hood shows stronger

Than the narrow bounds which now  
distract the world;  
When the cannons roar and trumpets  
blare no longer,  
And the ironclad rusts, and battle  
flags are furled;

When the bars of creed and speech and  
race, which sever,  
Shall be fused in one humanity for ever.

Oh, glorious end! oh, blessed consum-  
mation!

Oh, precious day! for which we wait  
and yearn.

Thou shalt come, and knit men nation  
unto nation.

But not for us, who watch to day  
and burn,

Thou shalt come, but after what long  
years of trial,

Weary watchings, baffled longings, dull  
denial!

AT MIDNIGHT.

THEY were two poor young girls, little  
older than children,

Who passed through the midnight  
streets of the city

Singing.

Poorly clad, morning-eyed, with a  
strange look of shyness,

Linked arms, and round cheeks, and  
smooth heads bent together,

Singing.

Singing, great Heaven! with their  
fresh childish voices,

Some low-murmured ditty, half hymn-  
tune, half love-song,

Singing,

Always by hushed square, and long  
street deserted,

As from school by the old village street  
on fair evenings,

Singing,

Singing, and knowing it not, the old  
burden  
That is born out of secular wrongs and  
oppressions,  
Singing,

Of selfish riches, of misery and hun-  
ger,  
Of sin that is bred of the wants of the  
wretched,  
Singing,

Of poor bribes that purchase souls, of  
the endless,  
Perpetual harvest of pain and of evil,  
Singing,

So, they passed to the flaring sin-  
befouled places,  
And amid the thick throng of the fallen  
I lost them,  
Singing,

A hymn-tune, a love-song, a prayer  
chanted backward,  
A witch spell unholy, a sweet suffrage  
saintly  
Singing.

## NEMESIS.

WHO, without fear  
Piercing the inmost deeps of silent  
thought,  
Has won the prize with lonely labour  
sought,  
And many a bitter tear,  
He in his breast doth hold  
A rarer thing than gold,  
And a fair treasure greater than in  
words is told.

For he shall learn,  
Not from another's lore, but his own  
soul,  
Whither life's hidden ocean currents  
roll,

And with sure helm shall turn  
Into a haven fair,  
Where, on the breathless air,  
Nor wave nor storm shall break, but  
peace is everywhere.

There, in light boat  
Laid on the soft breast of the summer  
sea,  
Lapt day by day in great tranquillity,  
He carelessly shall float.  
He scarce shall see or hear  
A sight or sound of fear,  
Only a low-voiced siren always gliding  
near

Without the bar  
The enormous surges leap from sea to  
sky.  
Upon the ghostly inland summits  
high  
The avalanche thunders far.  
On the dull plains below,  
In long successions slow  
The toiling generations sow, and reap,  
and sow.

Dream-like, he sees  
The lurid smoke blot the beleaguered  
town,  
Or the great earthquake shake the city  
down ;  
Labours and miseries ;  
Fire takes them—famine, flood,  
And fever's hideous brood.  
By night the black skies redden with a  
glare like blood.

For him, meanwhile,  
Laid in the shelter of his silken sail,  
Tho' wind and storm on sea and land  
prevail,  
The enchanted waters smile.  
Always in that calm deep,  
Wherein life's currents sleep,  
He sees high heaven reflected, tho' all  
men may weep.

Yet now and then  
Between the stars and him, deep, sunk  
below,  
He starts to see a strange dead sem-  
blance grow,  
Gone from the eyes of men.  
Some thin and pale-eyed ghost,  
By marred reflections crost,  
Of thoughts, and faiths, and yearnings  
long since lost.

And if these fade  
Betimes, he slowly gains to peace  
again ;  
But if too long they tarry, such a pain  
Those clear depths doth invade,  
That for sheer terror he,  
And utter misery,  
Flies to the storm-wrapt hills and  
hungry calling sea.

### TO A CHILD OF FANCY.

My little dove, my little lamb,  
In whom again a child I am ;  
My innocent, on whose fair head  
The glories of the unknown are shed ;

Who thro' the laughing summer day  
Spendest the rosy hours in play,  
Too much by joyous life possesst  
To give a willing thought to rest ;

Who, with the earliest shades of night,  
White-robed, in happy slumbers light,  
Recallest in thy stainless calm  
An angel resting from its psalm ;

Whence art thou come? What power  
could teach  
The secret of thy broken speech?  
What agile limb, what stalwart arm,  
Like thy sweet feebleness can charm?

With what a rapture of surprise  
This fair world meets thy steadfast eyes,  
As if they saw reflected there  
Faint images of scenes more fair.

Leaving another heaven behind,  
A heaven on earth thou can'st to find ;  
This world, so full of misery,  
Opens celestial gates for thee.

Oh ! if thou mightst not e'er grow wise  
With the sad learning born of sighs ;  
If those soft eyes might never here  
Grow dim for any bitter tear.

Vain thought,—no creature born of  
earth  
Blooms best 'neath cloudless skies of  
mirth ;  
Only soft rains and clouds can dress  
Life's tree with flowers of blessedness.

Whate'er the lot thy fate shall give,  
At least, while life is mine to live,  
Thou shalt not lack a share of love,  
My little lamb, my little dove !

### SONG.

It was not that thy eyes  
Were blue as autumn skies,  
It was not that thy hair  
Was as an angel's fair.

No excellence of form could move  
A finer soul to so much love.

Nor that in thee I sought  
For precious gems of thought,  
Nor ever hoped to find  
Hid treasure in thy mind.  
Gray wisdom comes with time and age,  
And thine was an unwritten page.

But that I seemed in thee  
My other self to see,  
Yet purer and more high  
Than meets my inner eye,  
Like that enamoured boy who, gazing  
down,  
His lower self would in his higher  
drown.

### THE ORGAN-BOY.

GREAT brown eyes,  
Thick plumes of hair,  
Old corduroys  
The worse for wear ;  
A buttoned jacket,  
And peeping out  
An ape's grave poll,  
Or a guinea pig's snout ;  
A sun-kissed face,  
And a dimpled mouth,  
With the white flashing teeth  
And soft smile of the south ;  
A young back bent,  
Not with age or care,  
But the load of poor music  
'Tis fated to bear :  
But a commonplace picture  
To commonplace eyes,  
Yet full of a charm  
Which the thinker will prize.

They were stern cold rulers,  
Those Romans of old,  
Scorning art and letters  
For conquest and gold ;  
Yet leavening mankind,  
In mind and in tongue,  
With the laws that they made  
And the songs that they sung :  
Sitting rose-crowned,  
With pleasure-choked breath,  
As the nude young limbs crimsoned,  
Then stiffened in death ;  
Piling up monuments  
Greater than praise,  
Thoughts and deeds that shall live  
To the latest of days :  
Adding province to province,  
And sea to sea,  
Till the idol fell down  
And the world rose up free.

And this is the outcome,  
This vagabond child  
With that statue-like face  
And eyes soft and mild,  
This creature so humble,  
So gay, yet so meek,  
Whose sole strength is only  
The strength of the weak ;  
Of those long cruel ages  
Of lust and of guile,  
Naught left us to-day  
But an innocent smile.  
For the laboured appeal  
Of the orator's art,  
A few childish accents  
That reach to the heart.  
For those stern legions speeding  
O'er sea and o'er land,  
But a pitiful glance  
And a suppliant hand.  
I could moralize still ;  
But the organ begins,

And the tired ape swings downward  
And capers and grins :

And away flies romance.  
And yet, time after time,  
As I dwell on days spent  
In a sunnier clime,  
Of blue lakes deep set  
In the olive-clad mountains,  
Of gleaming white palaces  
Girt with cool fountains,  
Of minsters where every  
Carved stone is a treasure,  
Of sweet music hovering  
'Twixt pain and 'twixt pleasure ;  
Of chambers enriched,  
On all sides, overhead,  
With the deathless creations  
Of hands that are dead ;  
Of still cloisters holy,  
And twilight arcade,  
Where the lovers still saunter  
Thro' chequers of shade ;  
Of tomb and of temple,  
Arena and column,  
'Mid to-day's garish splendours,  
Sombre and solemn ;  
Of the marvellous town  
With the salt-flowing street,  
Where colour burns deepest,  
And music most sweet ;  
Of her the great mother,  
Who centuries sate  
'Neath a black shadow blotting  
The days she was great ;  
Who was plunged in such shame—  
She, our source and 'our home—  
That a foul spectre only  
Was left us of Rome ;  
She who, seeming to sleep  
Thro' all ages to be,  
Was the priests', is mankind's,  
Was a slave, and is free !

I turn with grave thought  
To this child of the ages,  
And to all that is writ  
In Time's hidden pages.  
Shall young Howards or Guelphs,  
In the days that shall come,  
Wander forth seeking bread  
Far from England and home ?

Shall they sail to new continents,  
English no more,  
Or turn—strange reverse—  
To the old classic shore ?  
Shall fair locks and blue eyes,  
And the rose on the cheek,  
Find a language of pity  
The tongue cannot speak—  
“ Not English, but angels ? ”  
Shall this tale be told  
Of Romans to be  
As of Romans of old ?  
Shall they too have monkeys  
And music ? Will any  
Try their luck with an engine  
Or toy spinning-jenny ?

Shall we too be led  
By that mirage of Art  
Which saps the true strength  
Of the national heart ?  
The sensuous glamour,  
The dreamland of grace,  
Which rot the strong manhood  
They fail to replace ;  
Which at once are the glory,  
The ruin, the shame,  
Of the beautiful lands  
And ripe souls whence they came ?

Oh, my England ! oh, Mother  
Of Freemen ! oh, sweet,  
Sad toiler majestic,  
With labour-worn feet !



Brave worker, girt round,  
Inexpugnable, free,  
With tumultuous sound  
And salt spume of the sea,  
Fenced off from the clamour  
Of alien mankind  
By the surf on the rock,  
And the shriek of the wind,  
Tho' the hot Gaul shall envy,  
The cold German flout thee,  
Thy far children scorn thee,  
Still thou shalt be great,  
Still march on uncaring,  
Thy perils unsharing,  
Alone, and yet daring  
Thy infinite fate.

Yet ever remembering  
The precepts of gold,  
That were written in part  
For the great ones of old—  
"Let other hands fashion  
The marvels of art;  
To thee fate has given  
A loftier part.  
To rule the wide peoples;  
To bind them to thee"  
By the sole bond of loving,  
That bindeth the free.  
To hold thy own place,  
Neither lawless nor slave;  
Not driven by the despot,  
Nor tricked by the knave.

But these thoughts are too solemn,  
So play, my child, play,  
Never heeding the connoisseur  
Over the way,  
The last dances of course;  
Then, with scant pause between,  
"Home, Sweet Home," the "Old  
Hundredth,"  
And "God Save the Queen."

See the poor children swarm  
From dark court and dull street,  
As the gay music quickens  
The lightsome young feet.  
See them now whirl away,  
Now insidiously come,  
With a coy grace which conquers  
The squalor of home.  
See the pallid cheeks flushing  
With innocent pleasure  
At the hurry and haste  
Of the quick-footed measure.  
See the dull eyes now bright,  
And now happily dim,  
For some soft-dying cadence  
Of love-song or hymn.  
Dear souls, little joy  
Of their young lives have they,  
So thro' hymn-tune and song-tune  
Play on, my child, play.

For tho' dull pedants chatter  
Of musical taste,  
Talk of hindered researches,  
And hours run to waste;  
Tho' they tell us of thoughts  
To ennoble mankind  
Which your poor measures chase  
From the labouring mind;  
While your music rejoices  
One joyless young heart,  
Perish bookworms and books,  
Perish learning and art—  
Of my vagabond fancies  
I'll e'en take my fill.  
"Qualche cosa, signor?"  
Yes, my child, that I will.

### PROCESSIONS.

To and fro, to and fro,  
The long, long processions go,

Fainter now and now more bright,  
 Now in shadow, now in light ;  
 Gay and sad, and gay again,  
 Mixed of pleasure, mixed of pain.  
 Bridal song and burial dirge,  
 Rippling blue and leaden surge ;  
 Sunlit plain and storm-wrapt hill,  
 Saintly lives or stained with ill ;  
 Youth and fire and frolic mirth,  
 Cold age bending back to earth ;  
 Hope and faith and high endeavour,  
 Dead lives slowly waning ever ;  
 Gleams of varying sun and shade,  
 Buds that burst, and flowers that fade ;  
 Lives that spring, and lives that fall,  
 And a Hidden Will o'er all.

## FOR LIFE.

SHUT in by self, as by a brazen wall,  
 In a dry, windless court alone,  
 Where no refreshing dews of eve may  
 fall,  
 Nor morning sun has shone.

But ever broader, ever higher, higher,  
 And ever yearly stronger grown,  
 In long circuitous folds high towers  
 aspire  
 Around her central throne.

And every year adds some fair outer-  
 court,  
 Green, lit with fountains, tended well,  
 Some dainty pleasure fit for joy and  
 sport,  
 But not wherein to dwell.

Or some high palace spired with fretted  
 gold,  
 And tricked with gems of thought and  
 art ;

In blank perspective ranks its chambers  
 cold,  
 Too fair to touch the heart.

For far within the inmost coil of towers,  
 Wrapt round with shadows like a cloak,  
 Where on the twilight hush of slow-  
 paced hours  
 Full utterance never broke ;

Neither of laughter nor the painful  
 sound  
 Of great thoughts come to sudden birth,  
 Nor murmurs from the Sea that frets  
 around  
 The dull laborious earth ;

Nor voice of love or child, nor note of  
 glee,  
 Nor sigh, nor any weal nor woe—  
 Naught but a chill, at times, as hope-  
 lessly  
 The slow years come and go ;

She broods immured, a devil or a saint,  
 Shut fast within a lonely cell,  
 Peopled with beatific visions faint,  
 Or ghostly shapes of hell.

And every year she hears from some  
 high gate  
 That breaks the dizzy circuit of the  
 wall,  
 By hands invisible, but strong as fate,  
 The loud portcullis fall.

And every year upon her duller ear  
 Faint and more faint the outward  
 echoes come,  
 Fainter the mingled tones of hope and  
 fear,  
 To this her cloistered home.

Till, when the weary circuit's done and  
past,  
The last gate clangs, the tall towers  
sway and fall,  
A great voice calls with thunders, and  
at last  
The captive breaks her thrall !

### IN THE PARK.

THE stock-jobbers' madams dash  
In splendour thro' park and street.  
'Tis a lightning of wheels that flash,  
'Tis a thunder of high-stepping feet.  
Shrink aside, vile churl, for these prin-  
cesses bold —  
These creatures of jewels and ermine  
and gold—

As they loll by in insolent pride,  
Scarce deigning a glance of the eye,  
They scatter their mud stains far  
and wide  
On the humbler passer-by—  
Some rhymester it may be, whose  
bitter pen  
Shall pay them their mud stains with  
interest again.

And, meanwhile, in some fetid street  
Their spouse and provider sits—  
A swindler fattening on lie and  
cheat,  
Sole fruit of his sordid wits—  
Full fed and bloated, or wan and pale,  
And haunted with fears of an imminent  
gaol.

When my lady of high degree  
Rolls by with her lackeys ablaze,  
It gladdens my heart, good  
madams, to see  
The disdain of you in her gaze.

I love her little, but, matched with you,  
I could fall on my knees to a pride so  
true.

Or when Lais rattles by  
In her vesture of visible shame,  
Poor child, I whisper, and who  
am I  
To call her dead life by its name?  
Sad tawdry splendours that, one sure  
day,  
Will spread swift pinions and flutter  
away !

But with you, vile spawn of deceit,  
What need to be chary of ire?  
Get down, I say, on your useless  
feet,  
And cleanse them with honest mire.  
Down with you, 'tis time, ere your  
coaches be made  
The central block of a new barricade.

Yet, perhaps, since in this poor life .  
Things are double, each against  
each,  
Among you sometimes is the  
mother and wife  
With her darlings to cherish and  
teach,  
The gentle lady, tender and kind,  
With no shadow of evil on heart or  
mind.

Ah, riddle of things ! ah, great  
Perpetual struggle and war !  
The good which should be, in-  
separate,  
From the evil things that are—  
How shall I, with purblind vision,  
arraign  
The marvellous measures of joy and  
pain ?

Roll by then, brave dames, roll by ;  
 You are part of a scheme, I trow.  
 No more will I look with a covet-  
     ous eye  
 On your splendours of pomp and  
     show ;  
 For I see in your gorgeous chariots the  
     strife,  
 The problem, the wonder, the satire,  
     of life.

LOSS AND GAIN.

FROM day to day, from year to year,  
 New waves of change assail us here ;  
 Each day, each year, prolongs the chain  
 Where pleasure alternates with pain.

New earth-born exhalations rise,  
 To hide the heavens from our eyes ;  
 New clouds obscure the vision fair,  
 Which once was round us everywhere.

New precious obligations come,  
 New sanctities of love and home,  
 New tender hopes, new anxious fears,  
 And sweet experiences of tears.

Old tastes are lost, old thoughts grow  
     strange,  
 Old longings gradually change,  
 Old faiths seem no more dear or true,  
 Lost in the full light of the new.

Youth's boundless aspirations fled,  
 And every wild ambition dead ;  
 Love not a meteor blinding sight,  
 But a pure ray of sober light.

And for the passionate self of old,  
 A deep affection, calm, not cold ;  
 A pitying love serenely kind,  
 A broader trust, a juster mind,

A faith which occupies the heart,  
 Tho' the brain halts to bear its part,  
 Which threat and promise fail to move,  
 Like the dim consciousness of love.

Tho' much be taken, much is left,  
 Not all forsaken nor bereft ;  
 From change on change we come to  
     rest,  
 And the last moment is the best.

SONG.

"ONLY a woman's hair,"  
 A fair lock severed and dead ;  
 But where is the maiden—where  
 That delicate head ?

Perhaps she is rich and fair,  
 Perhaps she is poor and worn,  
 And 'twere better that one somewhere  
 Had never been born.

And the careless hand that threw  
 That faded tress away—  
 Ah ! the false heart that once seemed  
     true,  
 Ah ! love flung away.

THE APOLOGY.

I MAY not scorn, I cannot prize  
 Those whose quick-coming fancies rise  
     Only in quaint disguise—

Some trick of speech, or mien, or  
     dress,  
 Some obsolete uncomeliness,  
     Some ancient wickedness.

Strange words antique for things not strange, Like broken tower and mould'ring grange, Made fair through time and change.	If feeble fancy fails to tear The outer husk of fact, and bare The seed to vital air,
Legends of knight, and squire, and dame, With this our common life the same In glory and in shame.	But too extended, too immense, Life's orb a vast circumference Stretches for mortal sense ;
Mean lives and narrow aims which owe The glamour and the charm they show To that strange " Long ago ; "	If simpler shows the past, more fair, Set in a pure and luminous air, Not dimmed by mists of care,
Nay, meaner, lower than our own, Because To-day is wider grown, Knows deeper, and is known.	Seeming to breathe a lighter strain Of lutes and lyres where none complain. With undertones of pain ;—
I doubt if anything there be Which best thro' mask of chivalry, Reveals myself to me ;	If haply there we seem to view Ourselves, behind a veil, yet true The germ from which we grew ;
Myself, its yearnings and desires, Its glimpses of supernal fires, The something which aspires ;	Not less our duty and our pride Forbidden to leave unsought, untried, The glories at our side.
Myself, the thing of blot and stain, Which fallen, rises, falls again, A mystery of pain ;	What ? shall the limner only paint Blue hills with adumbrations faint, Or misty aureoled saint,
Myself, the toiler slow to earn, The thinker sowing words that burn, The sensuous in turn,	And scorn to ponder flower or tree, Ripe fields, child-faces, summer sea. And all fair things that be ;
The vanquished, the disgraced, the saint, Now free as air, now bound and faint, By everyday constraint.	Nor care thro' passion's endless play, Our living brethren to portray, Who fare to doom to-day,
Or, if too near the present lies For common brains and common eyes To probe its mysteries.	When the sun's finger deigns to trace Each line and feature of man's face, Its beauty and disgrace ?
	Or shall the skilled musician dare Only to sound some jocund air Arcadian, free from care,

Round whom in strains that scorn  
control

The mighty diapasons roll,  
That speak from soul to soul ;

Our mystical modern music deep,  
Not piped by shepherds to their sheep,  
But wrung from souls that weep ;

Where seldom melody is heard,  
Nor simple woodland note of bird,  
So deep a depth is stirred,

Such blended harmonies divine  
Across the core of sweetness twine  
As round the grape the vine ?

Or shall some false cold dream of art  
Corrupt the voice and chill the heart,  
And turn us from our part,

Blot out the precious lesson won  
From all the ages past and done,  
That bard and seer are one ?

Dull creed of earthy souls ! who tell  
That, be the song of heaven or hell,  
Who truly sings, sings well,

And with the same encomiums greet  
The satyr baring brutish feet,  
And pure child-angels sweet ;

Whose praise in equal meed can share  
The Mænad with distempered hair,  
The cold Madonna fair.

Great singers of the past ! whose song  
Still streams down earthward pure and  
strong,  
Free from all stain of wrong.

Whose lives were chequered, but whose  
verse

The generations still rehearse ;  
Yet never soul grew worse.

What is it that these would ? shall I,  
Born late in time, consent to lie  
In the old misery ?

I—who have learnt that flesh is dust,  
What gulfs dissever love from lust,  
The wrongful from the just—

Put on again the rags of sense,  
A Pagan without innocence,  
A Christian in offence ?

Perish the thought ! I am to-day  
What God and Time have made me ;  
they  
Have ordered, I obey.

And day by day the labouring earth  
Whirls on—glad mysteries of birth,  
Sad death throes, sorrow, mirth,

Youth's flower just bursting into bloom,  
Wan age, a sun which sets in gloom,  
The cradle, and the tomb ;

These are around me—hope and fear,  
Not fables, but alive and near,  
Fresh smile and scarce-dried tear ;

These are around me, these I sing,  
These, these of every thought and thing,  
My verse shall heavenward wing.

The sun but seems to kiss the hill,  
And all the vast eternal Will  
Is moving, working, still

God is, Truth lives, and overhead  
Behold a visible glory spread ;  
Only the past is dead.

Courage ! arise ; if hard it seem  
To sing the present, yet we deem  
'Tis worthier than a dream.

Awake, arise, for to the bold  
The seeming desert comes to hold  
Blossoms of white and gold.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Shall I then choose to take my side  
With those who love their thoughts to  
hide  
In vague abstractions wide ?

Whose dim verse struggles to recall  
The hopes, the fears that rise and fall  
Deep in the souls of all.

Who fitly choose a fitting theme.  
Not things which neither are nor seem,  
No visionary dream,

But the great psalm of life, the long  
Harmonious confluence of song,  
Thro' all the ages strong,

But grown to wider scale to-day,  
And sweeping fuller chords than they  
Knew who have passed away.

A worthy theme for worthy bard  
But all too often blurred and marred  
By intonations hard.

So that the common eye and ear  
Can dimly see and faintly hear  
What should be bright and clear.

Who wing the fiery thought so high,  
An arrow shot into the sky,  
Its failing forces die,

And all the straining eye discerns  
Is but a spark which feebly burns,  
Then quenched to earth returns.

Or with a borrowed lyre devote  
Hoarse accent and untuneful throat  
To sound a difficult note,

By currents of conflicting thought,  
And counter themes which rise unsought,  
And jangling chords distraught.

Not song, but science, sign not sound,  
Not soaring to high heaven, but bound  
Fast to the common ground.

Who with a pitiless skill dissect  
What secret sources, vexed and checked,  
Surge upward in effect,

And trace in endless struggling rhyme  
How hearts forlorn of love and time  
Have rotted into crime.

Or those who, baffled and oppress  
By life's incessant fierce unrest,  
Where naught that is seems best,

Assail the tyrant, lash the wrong,  
Till but a wild invective long,  
Is left in lieu of song.

Most precious all, yet this is sure,  
The song which longest shall endure  
Is simple, sweet, and pure.

Not psychologic riddles fine,  
Not keen analysis, combine  
In verse we feel divine.

Nor fierce o'erbalanced rage alone,  
Which mars the rhyme, and dulls the  
tone—  
They may not sing who groan ;

But a sweet cadence, wanting much  
Of depth, perhaps, and fire, but such  
As finer souls can touch,

To finer issues ; such as come  
To him who far afield must roam,  
Thinking old thoughts of home.

Or who in Sabbath twilights hears  
His children lisp a hymn, and fears  
Lest they should see his tears.

\* \* \* \*

Wherefore, my soul, if song be thine,  
If any gleam of things divine  
Thro' thee may dimly shine,

If ever any faintest note  
Of far-off sweetness swell thy throat,  
True echo tho' remote,

This is my task, to sing To-day,  
Not dead years past and fled away,  
But this alone—To-day.

Or if I pause a little space  
Striving, across the gulf, to trace  
Some fine, forgotten face—

Some monarch of the race whose name  
Still lives upon the lips of fame,  
Touched by no stain of shame ;

Some sweet old love-tale, ever young,  
Which of old time the burning tongue  
Of god-like bard has sung ;

Some meed of effort nobly won,  
Some more than human task begun,  
Precious though left undone ;

Some awful story, strong to show  
How passions unrestricted flow  
Into a sea of woe ;

Not less my powers I strive to bend,  
Not less my song aspires to tend  
To one unchanging end,

By lofty aspirations, stirred  
Thro' homely music, daily heard,  
Trite phrase and common word,

Simple, but holding at the core  
Thoughts which strange speech and  
varied lore  
Have hid from men before.

To lift how little howsoe'er  
The hearts of toilers struggling here,  
In joyless lives and sore.

To make a little lighter yet  
Their lives by daily ills beset,  
Whom men and laws forget.

To sing, if sing I must, of love  
As a pure spell, with power to move  
Dull hearts to things above.

But choosing rather to portray  
The warring tides of thought which  
stray  
Thro' doubting souls to-day.

Or if at times, with straining eye  
And voice, I dwell on things which lie  
Hidden in Futurity,

And strive to tell in halting rhyme  
The glorious dawn, the golden prime.  
The victories of Time,

The race transfigured, wrong redressed,  
None worn with labour, nor oppressed,  
But peace for all and rest,



And knowledge throwing wide the  
 shrine  
 From whose broad doorways seems to  
 shine  
 An effluence Divine ;—

If of these visions fain to dream,  
 Not less I hold, whate'er may seem,  
 The Present for my theme,

The vain regret remembering,  
 Which lost occasion knows to bring,—  
 Afraid, yet bound, to sing.

### SONG.

AH ! love is like a tender flower  
 Hid in the opening leaves of life,  
 Which, when the springtide calls, has  
 power  
 To scorn the elemental strife—  
 So strong, that well it knows to gain  
 Fresh sweetness from the wind and rain.

So strong, and yet so weak, alas !  
 It waits the wooing of the sun ;  
 'Mid frosts and snows the brief hours  
 pass,  
 And when they melt the spring is done.  
 Gay blooms and honeyed fruits may  
 come,  
 But spring is dead, and birds are dumb.

### AS IN A PICTURE.

WHITE, on a cliff they stood ;  
 Beyond, a cypress wood.

Three there were—one who wept,  
 And one as though he slept ;

One with wide steadfast eyes  
 Fixed in a sad surprise.

Day, like a dying hymn,  
 Grew gradually dim.

A solitary star  
 Gleamed on them from afar.

Beneath, by sand and cave  
 Sobbed the continual wave.

Long time in reverent thought  
 Who these might be I sought,

Then suddenly I said,  
 " Oh, Lord of quick and dead ! "

### AT AN ALMSHOUSE.

BENEATH these shadows holy  
 Age rests, or paces slowly,  
 And muses, muses always  
 On that which once has been,  
 Recalling years long ended,  
 And vanished visions splendid ;  
 The throb, the flush of old days,  
 When all the world was green.

When every hour brought pleasure,  
 And every flower a treasure,  
 And whispered words were spoken,  
 And love was everywhere.  
 The swift brief hour of passion,  
 And then the old, old fashion,  
 The childish accents broken—  
 Oh, precious days and fair !

The years of self-denial,  
 Blissful tho' full of trial,  
 The young blooms waxing stronger,  
 The older come to fruit.

The tranquil days of gladness,  
 The gradual calm and sadness,  
 When childhood cheers no longer,  
 And all the house is mute.

Gone, but not wholly taken ;  
 Left, yet not all forsaken.  
 Again the worn hearts cherish  
 The memories of home ;  
 Again love-whispers greet them,  
 Their children run to meet them,  
 Blest dreams which never perish  
 Until the end be come.

*A YORKSHIRE RIVER.*

THE silent surfaces sleep  
 With a sullen viscous flow,  
 And scarce in the squalid deep  
 Swing the dead weeds to and fro,  
 And no living thing is there to swim or  
     creep  
 In the sunless gulfs below.

And beneath are the ooze and the  
     slime,  
 Where the corpse lies as it fell,  
 The hidden secrets of crime  
 Which no living tongue shall tell,  
 The shameful story of time,  
 The old, old burden of hell.

All the grasses upon the bank  
 Are bitter with scurf and drift,  
 And the reeds are withered and dank ;  
 And sometimes, when the smoke clouds  
     shift,

You may see the tall shafts in a hideous  
     rank

Their sulphurous fumes uplift.

From the black blot up the stream  
 The funeral barges glide,

And the waves part as in a dream,  
 From broad bow and sunken side ;  
 And 'tis "greed, greed !" hisses from  
     coal and from steam,  
 Foul freightage and turbid tide,

Like the life of a slumb'ring soul  
 Grown dull in content and health,  
 Whose dark depths lazily roll,  
 Whose still currents creep by stealth.  
 Nor sorrow nor yearning comes to  
     control  
 The monotonous tide of wealth.

Fair or foul, in life as in death,  
 One blight and corruption o'er all,  
 Blow on them, great wind, with thy  
     breath,  
 Fall, blinding water-floods, fall,  
 Till the dead life below awakeneth,  
 And deep unto deep doth call !

*FOR JUDGMENT.*

THE form was young, the face was  
     fair,  
 Her hands seemed still together tied,  
 'Twas as if Eve was standing there,  
 With the stern guardian at her side.

I mused on all the depths of will,  
 Of judgment, knowledge, right, and  
     wrong.

The pleadings crept their course, and  
     still

I sat in musings sad and long.

But when they ceased the tale of  
     shame,

And the cold voice pronounced her  
     name,

But one thought held me, that was all,  
 'Twas thus we did my sister call.

ODE ON A FAIR SPRING  
MORNING.

COME, friend, let us forget  
The turmoil of the world a little while,  
For now the soft skies smile,  
With dew the flowers are wet.  
Let us away awhile  
With fierce unrest and carking thoughts  
of care,  
And breathe a little while the jocund  
air,  
And sing the joyous measures sung  
By blither singers, when the world was  
young.

For still the world is young, for still  
the spring  
Renews itself, and still the lengthening  
hours  
Bring back the month of flowers ;  
The leaves are green to-day as those of  
old,  
For Chaucer and for Shakspeare ; still  
the gold  
Of August gilds the rippling breadths  
of wheat ;  
Young maids are fair and sweet  
As when they frolicked gay, with flash-  
ing feet,  
Round the old May-pole. All young  
things rejoice.  
No sorrow dulls the blackbird's mellow  
voice,  
Thro' the clear summer dawns or twi-  
lights long.  
With aspect not more dim  
Thro' space the planets swim  
Than of old time o'er the Chaldean  
plain.  
We only, we alone,  
Let jarring discords mar our song.

And find our music take a lower tone.  
We only with dim eyes  
And laboured vision feebly strain,  
And flout the undying splendours of  
the skies.

Oh, see how glorious show,  
On this fair morn in May, the clear-cut  
hills,  
The dewy lawns, the hawthorns white,  
Argent on plains of gold, the growing  
light  
Pure as when first on the young earth  
The faint warm sunlight came to birth.  
There is a nameless air  
Of sweet renewal over all which fills  
The earth and sky with life, and every-  
where,  
Before the scarce seen sun begins to  
glow,  
The birds awake which slumbered all  
night long,  
And with a gush of song,  
First doubting of their strain, then full  
and wide  
Raise their fresh hymns thro' all the  
country side ;  
Already, above the dewy clover,  
The soaring lark begins to hover  
Over his mate's low nest ;  
And soon, from childhood's early rest  
In hall and cottage, to the casement  
rise  
The little ones with their fresh opened  
eyes.  
And gaze on the old Earth, which still  
grows new,  
And see the tranquil heaven's unclouded  
blue,  
And, since as yet no sight nor sound of  
toil  
The fair spread, peaceful picture comes  
to soil,

Look with their young and steadfast gaze  
Fixed in such artless sweet amaze  
As Adam knew, when first on either  
hand  
He saw the virgin landscapes of the  
morning land.

Oh, youth, dawn, springtide, triune  
miracle,  
Renewing life in earth, and sky, and  
man,  
By what eternal plan  
Dost thou revive again and yet again ?  
There is no morn that breaks,  
No bud that bursts, no life that comes  
to birth,  
But the rapt fancy takes,  
Far from the duller plains of mind and  
earth,  
Up to the source and origin of things,  
Where, poised on brooding wings,  
It seems to hover o'er the immense  
inane,  
And see the suns, like feeble rings of  
light,  
Orb from the gray, and all the young-  
ling globe  
A coil of vapour circling like a dream,  
Then fixed compact for ever ; the first  
beam  
Strike on the dark and undivided sea,  
And wake the deeps with life. Oh,  
mystery  
That still dost baffle thought,  
Though by all sages sought,  
And yet art daily done  
With each returning sun,  
With every dawn which reddens in the  
skies,  
With every opening of awakened eyes !  
How shall any dare to hold  
That the fair world growing old,

Hath spent in vanished time  
The glories of its prime ?  
Beautiful were the days indeed  
Of the Pagan's simple creed,  
When all of life was made for girl and  
boy,  
And all religion was but to enjoy ;  
The fair chivalric dream  
To some may glorious seem,  
When from the sleeping centuries,  
Awakened Europe seemed to rise ;  
It may be that we cannot know,  
In these ripe years, the glory and the  
glow  
Of those young hours of time, and  
careless days,  
Borne down too much by knowledge,  
and opprest,  
To halt a little for the needed rest,  
And yield ourselves awhile to joy and  
praise ;  
Yet every year doth bring  
With each recurrence of the genial hour  
The infancy of spring,  
With store of tender leaf and bursting  
flower,  
And still to every home  
Fresh childish voices come,  
And eyes that opened last in Paradise,  
And with each rosy dawn  
Are night and death withdrawn ;  
Another world rises for other eyes ;  
Again begins the joy, the stress, the  
strife,  
Ancient as time itself, and wide as life.  
We are the ancients of the world  
indeed ;  
No more the simple creed,  
When every hill and stream and grove  
Was filled with shy divinities of love,  
Allures us, serving as our King  
A Lord of grief and suffering.

Too much our wisdom burdens to  
 permit

The fair, thin visions of the past, to flit  
 From shade to shade, or float from hill  
 to hill.

We are so compassed round by ill,  
 That all the music of our lives is  
 dumb,

Amid the turbulent waves of sound  
 that rise,

The discord born of doubts, and tears,  
 and sighs,

Which daily to the listening ear do  
 come ;

Nay, oft, confounded by the incessant  
 noise

Of vast world-engines, grinding law on  
 law,

We lose the godhead that our fathers  
 saw,

And all our higher joys,

And bear to plod on daily, deaf and  
 blind,

To a dark goal we dare not hope to  
 find.

But grows the world then old ?

Nay, all things that are born of time  
 Spring upwards, and expand from youth  
 to prime,

Ripen from flower to fruit,  
 From song-tide till the days are mute,  
 Green blade to ear of gold.

But not the less through the eternal  
 round

The sleep of winter wakes in days of  
 spring,

And not the less the bare and frozen  
 ground

Grows blithe with blooms that burst  
 and birds that sing.

Nature is deathless ; herb and tree,  
 Through time that has been and shall be,

Change not, although the outward  
 form

Seem now the columned palm  
 Nourished in zones of calm,  
 And now the gnarled oak that defies  
 the storm.

The cedar's thousand summers are no  
 more

To her than are the fleeting petals gay  
 Which the young spring, ere March is  
 o'er,

Scarce offered, takes away.  
 Eternal are her works. Unchanging she,  
 Alike in short-lived flower and ever-  
 changing sea.

We, too, are deathless ; we,  
 Eternal as the Earth,  
 We cannot cease to be  
 While springtide comes or birth.

If our being cease to hold  
 Reflected lights divine  
 On budding lives, with every day they  
 shine

With unabated gold.  
 Though lost it may be to our mortal  
 sight,

It cannot be that any perish quite—  
 Only the baser part forgets to be.  
 And if within the hidden Treasury  
 Of the great Ruler we awhile should  
 rest,

To issue with a higher stamp imprest,  
 With all our baser alloy purged and  
 spent,

Were we not thus content ?

Our thoughts too mighty are  
 To be within our span of years con-  
 fined,

Too deep and wide and far,  
 The hopes, the fears, that crowd the  
 labouring mind,

The sorrows that oppress,  
The sanctities that bless,  
Are vaster than this petty stage of things.

The soaring fancy mounts on careless wings  
Beyond the glimmer of the furthest star.

The nightly watcher who with patient eye

Scans the illumined sky,  
Knows when the outward rushing fire shall turn,

And in far ages hence shall brightly burn  
For eyes to-day undreamt of. The clear voice

From Greece or Israel thro' the centuries heard

Still bids us tremble or rejoice,  
Stronger than living look or word ;

The love of home or race,  
Which doth transfigure us, and seems to bring

On every heaven-lit face  
Some shadow of the glory of our King,  
Fades not on earth, nor with our years doth end ;

Nay, even earth's poor physical powers transcend

The narrow bounds of space and time,  
The swift thought by some mystic sympathy

Speeding through desert sand, and storm-tost sea.

And shall we hold the range of mind  
Is to our little lives confined ;

That the pure heart in some blest sphere above,

Loves not which here was set on fire of love ;

The clear eye scans not still, which here could scan

The confines of the Universal plan ;

The seer nor speaks nor thinks his thoughts sublime,  
And all of Homer is a speck of lime ?

Nay, friend, let us forget  
The conflicts of our doubt a little while,

Again our springs shall smile ;  
We shall not perish yet.

If God so guide our fate,  
The nobler portions of ourselves shall last

Till all the lower rounds of life be past,  
And we, regenerate.

We too again shall rise,  
The same and not the same,

As daily rise upon the orient skies  
New dawns with wheels of flame.

So, if it worthy prove,  
Our being, self-perfected, shall upward move

To higher essence, and still higher grown,

Not sweeping idle harps before a throne,

Nor spending praise where is no need of praise,

But through unnumbered lives and ages come

From pure laborious days,  
To an eternal home,

Where spring is not, nor birth, nor any dawn,

But life's full noontide never is withdrawn.

LOVE TRIUMPHANT.

Love took me up, a naked, helpless child,

Love laid me sleeping on the tender breast,

Love gazed on me with saintly eyes  
and mild,  
Love watched me as I lay in happy rest,  
Love was my childhood's stay, my  
chiefest good,  
My daily friend, my solace, and my  
food.

But when to Love's own stature I was  
come,  
Treading the paths where fabled Loves  
abound,  
Hard by the Cytherean's magic home,  
Loveless I paced alone the enchanted  
ground.  
Some phantoms pale I marked, which  
fled away,  
And lo, my youth was gone ; my hair  
turned gray.

Loveless I lived long time, until I  
knew  
A thrill since childish hours unknown  
before,  
My cloistered heart forth to the wicket  
flew,  
And Love himself was waiting at the  
door.  
And now, howe'er the treacherous  
seasons move,  
Love dwells with me again, and I with  
Love.

Love folds me round, Love walks with  
me, Love takes  
My heart and burns it with a holy fire ;  
Love lays me on his silver wings, and  
makes  
My fainting soul to thinner air aspire.  
Love of the Source, the Race, the  
True, the Right,  
This is my sole companion day and  
night.

### TOLERANCE.

CALL no faith false which e'er has  
brought  
Relief to any laden life,  
Cessation from the pain of thought,  
Refreshment 'mid the dust of strife.

What though the thing to which they  
kneel  
Be dumb and dead as wood or stone,  
Though all the rapture which they feel  
Be for the worshipper alone ?

They worship, they adore, they bow  
Before the Ineffable Source, before  
The hidden soul of good ; and thou,  
With all thy wit, what dost thou more ?

Kneel with them, only if there come  
Some zealot or sleek knave who strives  
To mar the sanctities of home,  
To tear asunder wedded lives ;

Or who by subtle wile has sought,  
By shameful promise, shameful threat,  
To turn the thinker from his thought,  
To efface the eternal landmarks set,

'Twixt faith and knowledge ; hold not  
peace

For such, but like a sudden flame  
Let loose thy scorn on him, nor cease  
Till thou hast covered him with shame.

### A HYMN IN TIME OF IDOLS.

THOUGH they may crowd  
Rite upon rite, and mystic song on  
song ;

Though the deep organ loud  
Through the long nave reverberate full  
and strong ;  
Though the weird priest,  
Whom rolling clouds of incense half  
conceal,  
By gilded robes increased,  
Mutter and sign, and proudly prostrate  
kneel ;  
Not pomp, nor song, nor bended  
knee  
Shall bring them any nearer Thee.

I would not hold  
Therefore that those who worship still  
where they,  
In dear dead days of old,  
Their distant sires, knelt once and  
passed away,  
May not from carven stone,  
High arching nave and reeded column  
fine,  
And the thin soaring tone  
Of the keen organ catch a breath  
divine,  
Or that the immemorial sense  
Of worship adds not reverence.

But by some bare  
Hill side or plain, or crowded city  
street,  
Wherever purer spirits are,  
Hearts with love inflamed together  
meet,  
Rude bench and naked wall,  
Humble and sordid to the world-  
dimmed sight,  
On these shall come to fall  
A golden ray of consecrating light,  
And thou within the midst shalt  
there  
invisible receive the prayer.

In every home,  
Wherever there are loving hearts and  
mild,  
Thou still dost deign to come,  
Clothed with the likeness of a little  
child ;  
Upon the hearth thou still  
Dwellest with them at meat, or work,  
or play ;  
Thou who all space dost fill  
Art with the pure and humble day by  
day ;  
Thou treasurest the tears they weep,  
And watchest o'er them while they  
sleep.

Spirit and Word !  
That still art hid in every faithful heart,  
Indwelling Thought and Lord—  
How should they doubt who know thee  
as thou art ?  
How think to bring thee near  
By magic words, or signs, or any spell,  
Who art among us here,  
Who always in the loving soul dost  
dwell.  
Who art the staff and stay indeed  
Of the weak knees and hands that  
bleed ?

Then let them take  
Their pagan trappings, and their lifeless  
lore ;  
Arise O Lord and make  
A worthy temple where was none  
before.  
Each soul its own best shrine,  
Its priesthood, its sufficient sacrifice,  
Its cleansing fount divine,  
Its hidden store of precious sanctities.  
Those only fit for priestcraft are  
From whom their Lord and King is far.



*ON A MODERN PAINTED WINDOW.*

TIME was they lifted thee so high  
Between the gazer and the sky,  
That all the worshipper might see  
Was God no more, but only thee.

So high was set thy cross, that they  
Who would thy every thought obey,  
Saw not thy gracious face, nor heard  
More than an echo of thy word.

But now 'tis nearer to the ground,  
The weeping women kneel around,  
The scoffers sneering by, deride  
Thy kingly claims, thy wounded side.

Only two beams of common wood,  
And a meek victim bathed in blood,  
Rude nails that pierce the tortured  
limb,  
Mild eyes with agony grown dim.

Aye, but to those who know thee right  
Faith strengthens with the nearer sight ;  
Love builds a deeper, stronger, creed  
On those soft eyes and hands that bleed.

Raised but a little from the rest,  
But higher therefore and more blest ;  
No more an empty priestly sign,  
But the more human, more divine.

*A MIDSUMMER NIGHT.*

THE long day wanes, the broad fields  
fade ; the night,  
The sweet June night, is like a curtain  
drawn.

The dark lanes know no faintest sound,  
and white

The pallid hawthorn lights the smooth-  
pleached lawn.

The scented earth drinks from the  
silent skies

Soft dews, more sweet than softest  
harmonies.

There is no stir nor breath of air, the  
plains

Lie slumbering in the close embrace of  
night,

Only the rustling landrail's note com-  
plains ;

The children's casement shows the  
half-veiled light,

Only beneath the solemn elm trees tall  
The fountain seems to fall and cease to  
fall.

No change will come, nor any sound  
be made

Thro' the still hours which shall pre-  
cede the day ;

Only the bright-eyed stars will slowly  
fade,

And a thin vapour rise up cold and  
gray,

Then a soft breeze will whisper fresh  
and cold,

And up the swift sun hurries red as  
gold.

And then another dawn, another link,  
To bind the coming to the vanished  
day,

Another foot-pace nearer to the brink  
Whereon our perilous footsteps hardly  
stay,

Another line upon the secular page  
Of birth-throes, bridals, sick-beds,  
youth and age.

Sweet summer night, than summer  
days more fair,  
Safe haven of the weary and forlorn,  
Splendid the gifts the luminous noon-  
tides bear,  
Lovely the opening eyelids of the  
morn ;  
But thou with softest touch trans-  
figurest  
This toilworn earth into a heaven of  
rest.

*GOOD IN EVERYTHING.*

THE white shafts of the dawn dispel  
The night clouds banked across the  
sky ;  
The sluggish vapours curl and die,  
And the day rises. It is well.

Unfold, ye tender blooms of life ;  
Sing, birds ; let all the world be  
gay :

'Tis well,—the morning of our day  
Must rise 'mid joyous songs and strife.

Beat, noonday sun, till all the plain  
Swoons, and life seems asleep or  
dead :

'Tis well,—the harvest of our bread  
Is sown in sorrow and reaped in pain.

Close, evening shadows, soft and deep,  
When life reviving breathes once  
more ;

Fall, silent night, when toil is o'er,  
And the soul folds her wings in sleep.

Come joy or grief, come right or wrong,  
In good or evil, life or death ;  
We are the creatures of His breath :  
Nor shall his hand forsake us long.

*THE REPLY.*

If I were to answer you  
As you would, my soul would soar  
Like the lark from earth-born eyes,  
Soar and hide in far-off skies,  
Soar and come to mortal view  
Nevermore.

Whatsoever chance befall,  
Of myself I'd die possest.  
If they hold a willing mind  
Silken threads like steel can bind.  
Only to be free is blest—  
Free is all.

Press me not, of earth am I ;  
Paths there are I dare not tread.  
Sweet are fields and flowers, the smile  
Of girlhood ; but a little while  
Blossoms youth, and overhead  
Laughs the sky.

What have we to do with love,—  
We for whom the seasons bring  
Nothing else than golden hours,  
Sun that burns, nor cloud that lowers,  
Thro' whose veins the tides of spring  
Lightly move ?

But if any pain should come  
To o'ercloud your summer, dear,  
Pain another's heart may share,  
Come and we our fate will dare,—  
Come, forgetting doubt and fear,  
To your home.

*THE TOUCHSTONE.*

SAID one, "'Tis Use must lend  
The clue our thoughts to bend  
To the true end."

Then I. "But can your thought  
Reach thus for ages sought,  
The eternal 'Ought?'"

"Would not the martyr spurn  
The truth you teach, to learn,  
Rot, rather,--burn?"

"Were not death's self more sweet  
Than to live incomplete  
A life effete?"

Then he. "But who shall hold  
They grasped not over bold  
Their faith of old,"

"Hoarding a random creed  
For which they bore to bleed,  
Not proved indeed?"

"For who the truth shall seize  
Grasps it by slow degrees,  
Not snatched, as these."

"And who would save his kind  
Must spend, the clue to find,  
Not heart, but mind."

Then I. "But mind alone,  
Is dead as wood or stone,  
Stirs naught and none."

"And who with prying eyes  
Will motive analyze,  
For him it dies."

"And all his hours remain  
A barren, endless plain,  
Not joy nor pain:"

"A tideless, windless sea,  
A blank eternity,  
Still doomed to be."

Then he. "The Use we teach  
All forms of being can reach,  
Saves all by each."

"No hasty glance or blind,  
To passing goods confined,  
Changeful as wind;"

"But with a steadfast view,  
Piercing the boundless blue,  
Up to the True."

"Contented to efface  
Self, if from out its place  
Blossoms the race;"

"If from lives crushed and wrecked,  
A perfected effect,  
Man stands erect."

"To whom all pleasures show  
An aspect mean and low  
Beside to know."

"Holding all other thought  
Than which for this is sought  
A thing of naught."

"This seeking, nothing less,  
What broader happiness  
Most lives may bless?"

Then I. "If the desire  
To which your thoughts aspire  
Blazed forth afire;"

"If all the task were done,  
All stubborn contests won  
Beneath the sun;"

"If hope came not to cheer,  
Nor bracing chill of fear,  
Sweet sigh nor tear;"

"But all the race should sleep  
In a broad calm, too deep  
For one to weep."

"And o'er all lands should reign  
A dull content inane,  
Worse far than pain ;"

"If, all its griefs forgot,  
Slowly the race should rot,  
Fade and be not ;"

"Would not the thought oppress  
The dream that once could bless,  
With such distress,"

"That, from the too great strain,  
Life withered, heart and brain,  
Would rise in vain ?"

Then he. "The outcome this  
Of all philosophies,  
'Who seeks shall miss.'"

"Who toil aright, for those  
Life's pathway, ere it close,  
Is as the rose."

"The spires of wisdom stand,  
Piled by the unconscious hand,  
From grains of sand."

"And pleasure comes unsought,  
To those who take but thought  
For that, they ought ;"

"A bloom, a perfume rare,  
A deep-hid jewel fair  
For those who dare."

"So who the race aright  
Loveth, a clearer sight  
Shall yet requite ;"

"And, since he seeks it less,  
An unsought happiness  
His toil shall bless."

Then I. "Twere strange indeed  
Should not our longing need  
A clearer creed."

"If only this were blest,  
To ponder well how best  
To serve the rest."

"Since grows ; 'tis understood,  
The happy multitude,  
From each man's good,"

"From general sacrifice,  
How should for each arise,  
Content for sighs ?"

"Or shall we deem it true  
That who the road pursue  
To gain the True,"

"May not the summit gain  
By paths direct and plain  
To heart and brain,"

"But with averted mind,  
And sedulously blind,  
The end must find ?"

"Is truth a masker, then,  
Rejoiced to mock the ken  
Of toiling men ?"

"Now tricked as Use, now Right,  
But always in despite  
Of our poor sight."

"Doth it not rather seem  
We live, whate'er we deem,  
As in a dream,"

"Acting, but acting still  
The dictates to fulfil  
Of a sure Will,"

"Seeing in Use and Right,  
Twin rays indefinite  
Of a great Light,"

"A mystic Sun and clear,  
Which through mind's atmosphere  
Can scarce appear,"

"But which not less we know ;  
In all fair flowers that grow,  
Loud storms that blow,"

"In noble thought and word,  
In aspirations heard,  
When hearts are stirred,"

"In every breathing breath,  
Life that awakeneth,  
Life that is death,"

"Whether serene it shine  
Or clouds our view confine,  
Wondrous, Divine?"

Then he. "Shall this excuse  
Him who a dream should choose  
Rather than Use,"

"That he prefer to hold  
Some dark abstraction old,  
Remote and cold,"

"Some thin ghost, fancy-dressed,  
Whereby men's souls oppressed,  
Forfeit the best,"

"And for a dream neglect  
What splendours of effect  
Their lives had decked?"

Then I. "Though mind and brain  
Wither and are in vain,  
And thought a pain;"

"Though sorrow, like a thief,  
Follow to rob belief,  
And faith be grief;"

"Though my obedience show  
No fruit I here may know  
Save utter woe;"

"Though health and strength decay ;  
Yea, though the Truth shall slay,  
I will obey."

*NOTHING LOST.*

WHERE are last year's snows,  
Where the summer's rose,—  
Who is there who knows?

Or the glorious note .  
Of some singer's throat,  
Heard in years remote?

Or the love they bore  
Who, in days of yore,  
Loved, but are no more?

Or the faiths men knew  
When, before mind grew,  
All strange things seemed true?

\* \* \* \* \*  
The snows are sweet spring rain,  
The dead rose blooms again,  
Young voices keep the strain.

The old affection mild  
Still springs up undefiled  
For love, and friend, and child.

The old-faiths grown more wide,  
Purer and glorified,  
Are still our lifelong guide.

Nothing that once has been,  
Tho' ages roll between  
And it be no more seen,

Can perish, for the Will  
Which doth our being fulfil,  
Sustains and keeps it still.

*THE HIDDEN SELF.*

I KNOW not if a keener smart  
Can come to finer souls than his  
Who hears men praise him, mind or  
heart,  
For something higher than he is.

Who fain would say, "Behold me,  
friends,  
That which I am, not what you deem,  
A thing of low and narrow ends,  
Sordid, not golden as I seem.

See here the hidden blot of shame,  
The weak thought that you take for  
strong,  
The brain too dull to merit fame,  
The faint and imitative song."

But dares not, lest discovery foul  
Not his name only, but degrade  
Heights closed but to the soaring soul,  
Names which scorn trembles to in-  
vade;

And doth his inner self conceal  
From all men in his own despite,  
Hiding what he would fain reveal,  
And a most innocent hypocrite.

*MARCHING.*

ONCE, and once again,  
From the thick crowd of men,  
Loud toil and high endeavour,  
There comes a secret sound,  
Where the thinkers stand around,  
And sometimes 'tis "For ever,"  
Sometimes "Never."

Always that ceaseless throng  
Has filed those paths along,  
Those painful hills ascended;  
Thro' fair meads of success,  
Thro' barren sands they press,  
Defeats and triumphs splendid,  
Till 'tis ended.

The glory and the shame  
Different, and yet the same  
The efforts and the aspirations,  
Unlike in mien and speech,  
Pressed onwards each on each,  
Go the endless alternations  
Of the nations.

And the rhythm of their feet,  
The ineffable low beat  
Of those vast throngs pacing slowly,  
Floats on the sea of Time  
Like a musical low chime  
From a far isle, mystic, holy,  
Tolling slowly.

And from the endless column  
Goes up that strange rhyme solemn  
Of thoughts which naught shall sever,  
The contrast sad and sweet,  
Of opposite streams which meet;  
Sometimes the glad "For ever,"  
Sometimes "Never."

*COURAGE!*

THERE are who, bending supple knees,  
Live for no end except to please,  
Rising to fame by mean degrees ;  
But creep not thou with these.

They have their due reward ; they bend  
Their lives to an unworthy end—  
On empty aims the toil expend  
Which had secured a friend.

But be not thou as these, whose mind  
Is to the passing hour confined ;  
Let no ignoble fetters bind  
Thy soul, as free as wind.

Stand upright, speak thy thought, de-  
clare  
The truth thou hast that all may  
share ;  
Be bold, proclaim it everywhere :  
They only live who dare.

*GILBERT BECKETT AND THE  
FAIR SARACEN.*

THE last crusader's helm had gleamed  
Upon the yellow Syrian shore ;  
No more the war-worn standards  
streamed,  
The stout knights charged and fell  
no more ;  
No more the Paynim grew afraid—  
The crescent floated o'er the cross.  
But to one simple Heathen maid  
Her country's gain was bitter loss ;

For love, which knows not race or creed,  
Had bound her with its subtle  
chain,—

Love, which still makes young hearts  
to bleed,

For this one, mingled joy with pain,  
And left for one brief hour of bliss,  
One little span of hopes and fears,  
The memory of a parting kiss,  
And what poor solace comes of tears.

A lowly English squire was he,  
A prisoner chained, enslaved, and  
sold ;

A lady she of high degree.

'Tis an old tale and often told :  
'Twas pity bade the brown cheek glow,  
'Twas love and pity drew the sigh,  
'Twas love that made the soft tear flow,  
The sweet sad night she bade him fly.

Far from the scorching Syrian plain  
The brave ship bears the Saxon home ;  
Once more to mists and rains again,  
And verdant English lawns, they come.  
I know not if as now 'twas then,  
Or if the growing ages move  
The careless, changeful hearts of men  
More slowly to the thoughts of love ;

But woman's heart was then, as now,  
Tender and passionate and true.  
Think, gentle ladies, ye who know  
Love's power, what pain that poor  
heart knew ;  
How, living always o'er again  
The sweet short past, she knew, too  
late,  
'Twas love had bound the captive's  
chain,  
Which broken, left her desolate.

Till by degrees the full young cheek  
Grew hollow, and the liquid eyes  
Still gazing seaward, large and meek,  
Took something of a sad surprise ;

As one who learns, with a strange chill,  
 'Mid youth and wealth's unclouded  
 day,  
 Of sad lives full of pain and ill,  
 And thinks, "And am I too as  
 they?"

And by degrees most hateful grew  
 All things that once she held so  
 dear—  
 The feathery palms, the cloudless blue,  
 Tall mosque and loud muezzin clear,  
 The knights who flashed by blinded  
 street,  
 The lattice lit by laughing eyes,  
 The songs around the fountain, sweet  
 To maidens under Eastern skies.

And oft at eve, when young girls told  
 Tales precious to the girlish heart,  
 She sat alone, and loved to hold  
 Communion with her soul apart.  
 Till at the last, too great became  
 The hidden weight of secret care,  
 And girlish fears and maiden shame  
 Were gone, and only love was there.

And so she fled. I see her still  
 In fancy, desolate, alone,  
 Wander by arid plain and hill,  
 From early dawn till day was done ;  
 Sun-stricken, hungry, thirsty, faint,  
 By perilous paths I see her move,  
 Clothed round with pureness like a  
 saint,  
 And fearless in the might of love.

Till lo ! a gleam of azure sea,  
 And rude ships moored upon the  
 shore.  
 Strange, yet not wholly strange, for he  
 Had dared those mystic depths  
 before.

And some good English seaman bold,  
 Remembering those he left at home,  
 Put gently back the offered gold,  
 And for love's honour bade her come.

And then they sailed. No pirate bark  
 Swooped on them, for the Power of  
 Love  
 Watched o'er that precious wandering  
 ark,  
 And this his tender little dove.  
 I see those stalwart seamen still  
 Gaze wondering on that childish form,  
 And shelter her from harm and ill,  
 And guide her safe through wave  
 and storm.

Till under grayer skies a gleam  
 Of white, and taking land she went,  
 Following our broad imperial stream,  
 Or rose-hung lanes of smiling Kent.  
 Friendless I see her, lonely, weak,  
 Thro' fields where every flower was  
 strange,  
 Go forth without a word to speak,  
 By burgh and thorp and moated  
 grange.

For all that Love himself could teach  
 This passionate pilgrim to our shore,  
 Were but two words of Saxon speech,  
 Two little words and nothing more—  
 "Gilbert" and "London"; like a  
 flame  
 To her sweet lips these sounds would  
 come,  
 The syllables of her lover's name,  
 And the far city of his home.

I see her cool her weary feet  
 In dewy depths of crested grass ;  
 By clear brooks fringed with meadow-  
 sweet,  
 And daisied meads, I see her pass ;



I see her innocent girlish glee,  
 I see the doubts which on her crowd,  
 O'erjoyed with bird, or flower, or tree,  
 Despondent for the fleeting cloud.

I see her passing slow, alone,  
 By burgh and thorp and moated  
 grange,  
 Still murmuring softly like a moan  
 Those two brief words in accents  
 strange.  
 Sometimes would pass a belted earl  
 With squires behind in brave array ;  
 Sometimes some honest, toilworn churl  
 Would fare with her till close of day.

The saintly abbess, sweet and sage,  
 Would wonder as she ambled by,  
 Or white-plumed knight or long-haired  
 page  
 Ride by her with inquiring eye.  
 The friar would cross himself, and say  
 His paternosters o'er and o'er ;  
 The gay dames whisper Welladay !  
 And pity her and nothing more.

But tender women, knowing love  
 And all the pain of loneliness,  
 Would feel a sweet compassion move,  
 And welcome her to rest and food,  
 And walk with her beyond the hill,  
 And kiss her cheek when she must go ;  
 And "Gilbert" she would murmur still,  
 And "London" she would whisper  
 low.

And sometimes sottish boors would rise  
 From wayside tavern, where they  
 sate,  
 And leer from heated vinous eyes,  
 And stagger forth with reeling gait,

And from that strong unswerving will  
 And clear gaze shrink as from a  
 blow ;  
 And "Gilbert" she would murmur still,  
 And "London" she would whisper  
 low.

Then by the broad suburban street,  
 And city groups that outward stray  
 To take the evening, and the sweet  
 Faint breathings of the dying day—  
 The gay young 'prentice, lithe and slim,  
 The wimpled maid, demurely shy,  
 The merchant somewhat grave and  
 prim,  
 The courtier with his rolling eye.

And more and more the growing crowd  
 Would gather, wondering whence she  
 came  
 And why, with boorish laughter loud,  
 And jeers which burnt her cheek  
 with flame.  
 For potent charm to save from ill  
 But one word she made answer now :  
 For "Gilbert" she would murmur still,  
 And "Gilbert" she would whisper  
 low.

Till some good pitiful soul—not then  
 Our London was as now o'ergrown—  
 Pressed through the idle throng of men,  
 And led her to his home alone,  
 And signing to her he would find  
 Him whom she sought, went forth  
 again  
 And left her there with heart and mind  
 Distracted by a new-born pain.

For surely then, when doubt was o'er,  
 A doubt before a stranger came,  
 "He loved me not, or loves no more."  
 Oh, virgin pride ! oh, maiden shame !

Almost she fled, almost the past  
Seemed better than the pain she  
knew ;

Her veil around her face she cast :  
Then the gate swung—and he was  
true.

Poor child ! they christened her, and so  
She had her wish. Ah, yearning  
heart,

Was love so sweet then ? would you  
know

Again the longing and the smart ?  
Came there no wintry hours when you  
Longed for your native skies again,  
The creed, the tongue your girlhood  
knew,

Aye, even the longing and the pain ?

Peace ! Love is Lord of all. But I,  
Seeing her fierce son's mitred tomb,  
Conjoin with fancy's dreaming eye  
This love tale, and that dreadful  
doom.

Sped hither by a hidden will,  
O'er sea and land I watch her go ;  
"Gilbert" I hear her murmur still,  
And "London" still she whispers  
low.

### TO A CHILD OF FANCY.

THE nests are in the hedgerows,  
The lambs are on the grass ;  
With laughter sweet as music  
Thy hours lightfooted pass,  
My darling child of fancy,  
My winsome prattling lass.

Blue eyes, with long brown lashes,  
Thickets of golden curl,  
Red little lips disclosing  
Twin rows of fairy pearl,

Cheeks like the apple blossom,  
Voice lightsome as the merle.

A whole Spring's fickle changes  
In every short-lived day,  
A passing cloud of April,  
A flowery smile of May,  
A thousand quick mutations  
From graver moods to gay.

Far off, I see the season  
When thy childhood's course is run,  
And thy girlhood opens wider  
Beneath the growing sun,  
And the rose begins to redden,  
But the violets are done.

And further still the summer,  
When thy fair tree, fully grown,  
Shall burgeon, and grow splendid  
With blossoms of its own,  
And the fruit begins to gather,  
But the buttercups are mown.

If I should see thy autumn,  
'Twill not be close at hand,  
But with a spirit vision,  
From some far distant land.  
Or, perhaps, I hence may see thee  
Amongst the angels stand.

I know not what of fortune  
The future holds for thee,  
Nor if skies fair or clouded  
Wait thee in days to be,  
But neither joy nor sorrow  
Shall sever thee from me.

Dear child, whatever changes  
Across our lives may pass,  
I shall see thee still for ever,  
Clearly as in a glass,  
The same sweet child of fancy,  
The same dear winsome lass.

## A CYNIC'S DAY-DREAM.

SOME men there be who can descry  
 No charm in earth or sea or sky,  
 Poor painful bigot souls, to whom  
 All sights and sounds recall the tomb,  
 And some who do not fear to use  
 God's world for tavern or for stews.  
 Some think it wisdom to despoil  
 Their years for gold and troublous toil ;  
 While others with cold dreams of art  
 Would feed the hunger of the heart,  
 And dilettanti dare to stand,  
 Eternities on either hand !

But with no one of these shall I  
 Make choice to live my life or die,—  
 Rather let me elect to give  
 What span of life is mine to live,  
 To honest labour, daily sought,  
 Crowned with the meed of patient  
 thought ;

To precious friends for ages dead,  
 But loved where'er their words are  
 read ;

To others living with us still,  
 Who sway the nation's mind and will  
 By eloquent pen or burning word,  
 Where hearts are fired and souls are  
 stirred.

So thro' the tranquil evenings long,  
 Let us awake our souls with song,  
 Such song as comes where no words  
 come,

And is most mighty when most dumb.  
 Then soar awhile on wings of art ;  
 Not that which chokes the vulgar mart,  
 But subtle hints and fancies fine,  
 When least completed most divine,—  
 Sun-copies of some perfect thought,  
 Thro' bronze or canvas fitly wrought,  
 Known when in youth 'twas ours to see  
 Thy treasure-houses, Italy !

Then turn from these to grave debate  
 What change of laws befits the State,  
 By what wise schemes and precepts best  
 To raise the humble and oppressed,  
 And slay the twin reproach of Time,  
 The fiends of Ignorance and Crime.

Or what if I might come to fill  
 A calmer part, and dearer still,  
 With one attempered soul to share  
 The joys and ills 'tis ours to bear ;  
 To grow together, heart with heart,  
 Into a whole where each is part ;  
 To blend together, soul with soul,  
 Neither a part, but each the whole ;  
 With strange creative thrills to teach  
 The dawning mind, the growing speech,  
 To bind around me precious hands  
 Of loving hearts and childish hands,  
 And lose the stains of time and sense  
 In those clear deeps of innocence ?

So if kind fate should grant at length,  
 Ere frame and brain have lost their  
 strength,

In my own country homestead dear,  
 To spend a portion of the year ;  
 What joys I'll prove if modest wealth  
 Should come with still unbroken health !  
 There, sheltered from the ruder wind,  
 Thro' the thick woods we'll range, to  
 find

The spring's first flower, the autumn's  
 fruit,

Strange fungus or misshapen root.  
 Mark where the wood-quist or the  
 thrush

Builds on tall pine or hazel bush ;  
 See the brave bird with speckled breast  
 Brood fearless on the teeming nest,  
 And bid the little hands refrain  
 From every act of wrong and pain.

Observe the gossip conies sit  
By their own doors, the white owl flit  
Thro' the dim fields, while I enjoy  
The wondering talk of girl or boy.  
Sweet souls, which at life's portal  
stand,  
And all within, a wonderland—  
Oh, treasure of a guileless love,  
Fit prelude of the joys above !

There, when the swift week nears its  
end,  
To greet the welcome Sunday friend,  
Through the still fields we'll wend our  
way,  
To meet the guest at close of day.  
And then, when little eyes in vain  
Long time have sought the coming  
train,  
A gradual distant sound, which fills  
The bosom of the folded hills,  
Till with white steam or ruddy light  
The wayworn convoy leaps to sight,  
Then stops and sets the traveller down,  
Bringing the smoke and news of town.  
And then the happy hours to come,  
The walk or ride which leads us home,  
Past the tall woods through which  
'twould seem  
Home's white walls hospitably gleam,—  
The well-served meal, the neighbour  
guest,  
The rosy darlings curled and dressed ;  
And, when the house grows silent, then  
The lengthened talk on books and  
men ;  
And on the Sunday morning still,  
The pleasant stroll by wood-crowned  
hill  
To church, wherein my eyes grow dim  
Hearing my children chant the hymn ;  
And seeing in their earnest look  
Something of innocent rebuke,

I lose the old doubt's endless pain,  
And am a little child again.

If fate should grant me such a home,  
So sweet the tranquil days would come,  
I should not need, I trust, to sink  
My weariness in lust or drink.  
Scant pleasure should I think to gain  
From endless scenes of death and pain ;  
'Twould little profit me to slay  
A thousand innocents a day ;  
I should not much delight to tear  
With wolfish dogs the shrieking hare ;  
With horse and hound to track to  
death

A helpless wretch that gasps for breath ;  
To make the fair bird check its wing,  
And drop, a dying, shapeless thing ;  
To leave the joy of all the wood  
A mangled heap of fur and blood,  
Or else escaping, but in vain,  
To pine, a shattered wretch, in pain ;  
Teeming, perhaps, or doomed to see  
Its young brood starve in misery ;  
With neither risk nor labour, still  
To live for nothing but to kill—  
I dare not ! If perplexed I am  
Between the tiger and the lamb ;  
If fate ordain that these shall give  
Their poor brief lives that I may live :  
Whate'er the law that bids them die,  
Others shall butcher them, not I,—  
Not such my work. Surely the Lord,  
Who made the devils by a word,  
Not men, but those who'd wield them  
well  
Gave these sad tortures of his Hell.

Ah ! fool and blind, to wander so ;  
Who hast lived long enough to know  
With what insane confusions teem  
The mazes of our waking dream,—

The dullard surfeited with gold  
 His bloated coffers fail to hold,  
 While the keen mind and generous  
     brain  
 From penury aspire in vain ;  
 Love's choicest treasures flung away  
 On some vile lump of coarsest clay ;  
 Pure girlhood chained to wretches foul,  
 Tainted in body as in soul ;  
 The precious love of wife or child  
 Not for the loving heart and mild,  
 But for the sullen churl, who ne'er  
 Knew any rule but that of fear ;  
 Fame, like Titania, stooping down  
 To set on asses' ears a crown ;  
 The shallow dunce, the fluent fool,  
 The butt and laughter of the school,  
 By fortune's strange caprice grown  
     great,  
 A light of forum or debate ;  
 The carnal lump devoid of grace,  
 With each bad passion in his face,  
 A saintly idol, round whose knees  
 Crowd throngs of burning devotees.

Great heaven ! how strange the tangle is,  
 What old perplexity is this ?  
 The very words of my complaint,  
 What else are they than echoes faint  
 Of the full fire, the passionate scorn,  
 Of high-souled singers and forlorn,  
 Who, in our younger England, knew  
 No care for aught but what was true,  
 But loved to lash with bitter hate  
 The shameless vices of the great ;  
 Who bade, in far-off days of Rome,  
 In verse their indignation come ;  
 Who, when we learn the secrets hid  
 Beneath the eldest Pyramid,  
 Or in those dim days further still,  
 Whose nameless ruin builds the hill,  
 Push back our search where'er we can,  
 Till first the ape became the man,

Will in rude satire bid us find  
 The earliest victories of mind ?  
 Strong souls, rebellious with their lot,  
 Who longed for right and found it not ;  
 Too strong to take things as they seem,  
 Too weak to comprehend the scheme,  
 Too deeply fired with honest trust  
 To dream that God might be unjust ;  
 Yet, seeing how unequal show  
 His providences here below,  
 By paradoxes girt about,  
 Grew thro' excess of faith to doubt.  
 Oh, faithful souls, who love the true,  
 Tho' all be false, yet will not you ;  
 Tho' wrong shall overcome the right,  
 Still is it hateful in your sight ;  
 Tho' sorely tempted, you, and tried,  
 The truth stands always at your side ;  
 Tho' falsehood wear her blandest smile,  
 You only she shall ne'er beguile ;  
 For you, 'mid spectral sights and shows,  
 Life blushes with a hidden rose ;  
 Thro' the loud din of lower things  
 You hear the sweep of angel wings,  
 And with a holy scorn possess,  
 Wait till these clamours sink to rest.

### TO A LOST LOVE.

COLD snowdrops which the shrinking  
     new-Lorn year  
 Sends like the dove from out the  
     storm-lost ark ;  
 Sweet violets which may not tarry here  
     Beyond the earliest flutings of the  
     lark ;  
 Bright celandines which gild the tufted  
     brake  
 Before the speckled thrush her nest  
     has made ;

Fair frail anemones which star-like shake  
And twinkle by each sunny bank and  
glade ;

Pale primroses wherewith the virgin  
spring,

As with a garland, wreathes her  
comely head ;

No eyes have I for you, nor voice to  
sing.

My love is dead !

For she was young and pure and white  
as you,

And fairer and more sweet, and ah !  
as frail.

I dare not give to her the honour due,  
Lest, for a strain so high, my voice  
should fail.

Like you, she knew the springtide's  
changeeful hours ;

Like you, she blossomed ere the  
coming leaf ;

Like you, she knew not summer's teem-  
ing showers ;

Like you, as comely, and, alas ! as  
brief.

You may not see the roses, nor might  
she ;

Such swift short beauty is its only  
fruit ;

So a sweet silence is her eulogy,  
And praise is mute.

IN MEMORY OF A FRIEND.\*

BENEATH the feathery fronds of palm  
The white stone of a double grave,  
And on the horizon, blue and calm,  
The tropic ocean wave.

\* Ernest Schalch, Attorney-General for  
Jamaica, who, with his only sister, died of  
yellow fever in February, 1874.

'Twas three years since, no more, that  
thou,

Dear friend, with us, in daily round,  
Didst labour where we labour now,  
'Mid London's surge of sound.

Treading the dull slow paths of law,  
With little of reward or gain,  
To feel a high ambition gnaw  
Thy heart with tooth of pain,

And mark with scant content the crowd  
Fulfil the immemorial rule  
Which drives the fool with plaudits  
loud  
To glorify the fool.

And so with patient scorn didst gain  
To winnow from the growing heap  
Of barren precedent the grain  
Which hides there buried deep.

Till last, congenial labour came,  
To call thee o'er the tropic sea,  
And exile, gilt by toil and fame,  
Severed thy friends from thee.

Brief as we hoped, but ah, how long !  
Though lit by news of days well spent,  
Of rights defined, of law made strong,  
Of rebels grown content,

Of ordered codes so reasoned out,  
Speaking with voice so true and clear,  
That none who hear them still may  
doubt

" 'Tis Justice speaketh here."

Yet not the less thou barest part  
In the old talk we loved before ;  
The newest growths of thought or art  
Delighted more and more,

And all the marvels of thy isle,  
The lavish wealth of sea and land,  
The skies with their too constant smile,  
Loud surf on breathless strand,

The shallow nature fierce, yet gay,  
Of our dark brethren ; thou didst learn,  
Noting—but gazing, far away,  
With eyes that still would yearn,

For that fair time when, toil being  
done,  
The happy day at length should come,  
When with our kindly autumn sun  
Thou should'st revisit home.

\* \* \* \* \*  
It was this very year ; and then  
The plague, which long time, dealing  
death,  
Had vexed the shores of kindred men,  
On those breathed deadly breath.

And one, I know not who, their guest,  
Sickening, Love drew them forth to  
tend,  
Careless of needful food and rest,  
Their fever-stricken friend,

Who owed to them life's resurgent  
power ;  
While for those duteous martyrs twain,  
Brother and Sister, one blest hour  
Brought one release from pain.

Too generous natures ! kindred souls !—  
And now, round those twin tombs the  
wave,  
Forgetful of their story, rolls,  
And the palms shade their grave.

\* \* \* \* \*  
And we—what shall we say of thee ?—  
Thou hast thy due reward, oh, friend—  
We serve a High Necessity,  
To an Invisible End.

That waste nor halting comes at all  
In all the scheme is all we know ;  
The force was formed that bade thee  
fall,  
Millions of years ago.

The clouds of circumstance unite,  
The winds of fate together roll ;  
They meet ; there bursts a sudden light,  
And consecrates a soul !

### IT SHALL BE WELL.

If thou shalt be in heart a child,  
Forgiving, tender, meek, and mild,  
Though with light stains of earth  
defiled,  
Oh, soul, it shall be well.

It shall be well with thee indeed,  
Whate'er thy race, thy tongue, thy  
creed ;  
Thou shalt not lose thy fitting meed.  
It shall be surely well.

Not where, nor how, nor when we  
know,  
Nor by what stages thou shalt grow ;  
We may but whisper faint and low,  
“ It shall be surely well.”

It shall be well with thee, oh, soul,  
Tho' the heavens wither like a scroll ;  
Tho' sun and moon forget to roll,  
Oh, soul, it shall be well.

### A REMONSTRANCE.

If ever, for a passing day,  
My careless rhymes shall gain to please,  
I would that those who read may say,  
“ Left be no more than these ?”

For sure it is a piteous thing  
That those blest souls to whom is given  
The instinct and the power to sing,  
The choicest gift of heaven,

Not from high peak to peak alone  
Our faithful footsteps care to guide,  
But oft by plains of sand and stone,  
Dull wastes, and naught beside.

Who the low crawling verse prolong,  
Careless alike of fame and time ;  
The form, but not the soul of song—  
A dreary hum of rhyme.

A straight road, by a stagnant stream,  
Where the winged steed, which late  
would soar  
From the white summits like a dream,  
Creeps slowly evermore.

A babble of sound, like that flat noise  
Which, when the harmonies grow  
dumb,  
Between the symphony's awful joys,  
Too oft is heard to come.

Grave error ; since not all of life  
Is rhythmic ; oft by level ways  
We walk ; the sweet creative strife,  
The inspired heroic days,

Are rare for all,—no food for song,  
Are common hours ; and those who  
hold  
The gift, the inspiration strong,  
More precious far than gold,

Only when heart is fired and brain,  
And the soul spreads its soaring wing,  
Only when nobler themes constrain,  
Should ever dare to sing.

### THIRD SERIES (1875).

#### SONG.

TELL me where I may quench the too  
fierce fire  
Of hope and of desire ;  
Tell me how I may from my soul remove  
The sting and pain of love ;  
Tell me, and I will give to thee,  
Magician, my whole soul in fee.

And yet I know not what of fit reward,  
For enterprise so hard,  
I might convey thee in a loveless soul,  
Whose currents no more roll :  
A corpse, corruptible and cold,  
Were no great prize to have and hold.

Time only is it that will deign to take  
Such things for their own sake,

Preferring age to youth, grey hairs to  
brown,  
And to bright smiles the frown.  
Time takes the hope, Time dulls the  
smart,  
And first makes slow, then stops the  
heart.

Wherefore to Time I will address my  
song.  
Time, equable and strong,  
Take thou all hope and longing clean  
away—  
And yet I prithee stay ;  
Forbear, for rather I would be  
Consumed than turn to ice with  
thee.



## THE HOME ALTAR.

WHY should we seek at all to gain  
By vigils, and in pain,  
By lonely life and empty heart,  
To set a soul apart  
Within a cloistered cell,  
For whom the precious, homely hearth  
would serve as well?

There, with the early breaking  
morn,  
Ere quite the day is born,  
The lustral waters flow serene,  
And each again grows clean ;  
From sleep, as from a tomb,  
Born to another dawn of joy, and hope,  
and doom.

There through the sweet and toil-  
some day,  
To labour is to pray ;  
There love with kindly beaming  
eyes  
Prepares the sacrifice ;  
And voice and innocent smile  
Of childhood do our cheerful liturgies  
beguile.

There, at his chaste and frugal  
feast,  
Love sitteth as a Priest ;  
And with mild eyes and mien  
sedate,  
His deacons stand and wait ;  
And round the holy table  
Paten and chalice range in order  
serviceable.

And when ere night, the vespers  
said,  
Low lies each weary head,

What giveth He who gives them  
sleep,  
But a brief death less deep ?  
Or what the fair dreams given  
But ours who, daily dying, dream a  
happier heaven ?

Then not within a cloistered wall  
Will we expend our days ;  
But dawns that break and eves  
that fall  
Shall bring their dues of praise.  
This best befits a Ruler always  
near,  
This duteous worship mild, and reason-  
able fear.

## THE VOYAGE.

WHO climbs the Equatorial main  
Drives on long time through mist and  
cloud,  
Through zones of storm, through thun-  
ders loud,  
For many a night of fear and pain.

Till one night all is clear, and lo !  
He sees with wondering, awe-struck  
eyes,

In depths above, in depths below,  
Strange constellations light the skies—

New stars, more splendid and more fair,  
Yet not without a secret loss :  
He seeks in vain the Northern Bear,  
And finds instead the Southern Cross.

Yet dawns the self-same sun—the same  
The deep below the keel which lies ;  
Though this may burn with brighter  
flame,  
And that respond to bluer skies,

The self-same earth, the self-same sky :  
And though through clouds and tem-  
pests driven,  
The self-same seeker lifts an eye  
That sees another side of heaven.

No change in man, or earth, or aught,  
Save those strange secrets of the night :  
Nor there, save that another thought  
Has reached them through another sight,

Which may but know one hemisphere,  
The earth's mass blotting out the blue,  
Till one day, leaving shadows here,  
It sees all heaven before its view.

### THE FOOD OF SONG.

How best doth vision come  
To the poet's mind,—  
Lonely beneath the blue, unclouded  
dome,  
Or battling with the mighty ocean-wind ;  
In fair spring mornings, with the soar-  
ing lark,  
Or amid roaring midnight forests dark ?

Shall he attune his voice  
To sweetest song,  
When earth and sea and sky alike  
rejoice,  
And men are blest, and think no  
thought of wrong,  
In some ideal heaven, some happy isle,  
Where life is stiffened to a changeless  
smile ?

Or best amid the noise  
Of high designs,  
Loud onsets, shatterings, awful battle  
joys,  
Wherefor the loftier spirit longs and  
pines ;

Or by the depths of Thought's un-  
fathomed sea ;  
Or to loud thunders of the Dawn to be ?

Nature is less than naught  
In smile or frown,  
But for the formless, underlying thought  
Of mind and purpose greater than our  
own ;  
This only can these empty shows  
inform,  
Smiles through the calm, and animates  
the storm.

Nor 'mid the clang and rush  
Of mightier thought,  
The steeps, the snows, the gulfs, that  
whelm and crush  
The seeker with the treasure he has  
sought ;  
Too vast, too swift, too formless to  
inspire  
The fictive hand, or touch the lips with  
fire.

Rather amid the throng  
Of toiling men  
He finds the food and sustenance of  
song,  
Spread by hidden hands, again, and  
yet again,  
Where'er he goes, by crowded city  
street,  
He fares thro' springing fancies sad  
and sweet—

Some innocent baby smile ;  
A close-wound waist ;  
Fathers and children ; things of shame  
and guile ;  
Dim eyes, and lips at parting kissed in  
haste ;

The halt, the blind, the prosperous  
thing of ill ;  
The thief, the wanton, touch and vex  
him still.

Or if sometimes he turn  
With a new thrill,  
And strives to paint anew with words  
that burn  
The inner thought of sea, or sky, or  
hill :  
It is because a breath of human life  
Has touched them : joy and suffering,  
rest and strife.

And he sees mysteries  
Above, around,  
Fair spiritual fleeting agencies  
Haunting each foot of consecrated  
ground :  
And so, these fading, raises bolder eyes  
Beyond the furthest limits of the skies,

And every thought and word,  
And all things seen,  
And every passion which his heart has  
stirred,  
And every joy and sorrow which has  
been,  
And every step of life his feet have  
trod,  
Lead by broad stairs of glory up to  
God.

### THE YOUTH OF THOUGHT.

Oh happy days ! oh joyous time !  
When thought was gay and man was  
young,  
And to a golden flow of rhyme,  
Life like a melody was sung ;

When, in the springtime of the earth,  
The cloud-capt hill, the dewy grove,  
Clear lake and rippling stream gave  
birth  
To shy Divinities of love ;

When often to the jovial feast  
Of love or wine the people came,  
And Nature was the only priest,  
And Youth and Pleasure knew not  
shame.

Nor darker shape of wrong or ill  
The fearful fancy might inspire,  
Than vine-crowned on some shady hill,  
The Satyr nursing quaint desire.

And if some blooming youth or maid  
In depths of wood or stream were  
lost,  
Some love-lorn Deity, 'twas said,  
The blissful truant's path had crossed.

Sweet time of fancy, giving place  
To times of thinking scarce less  
blest,  
When Wisdom wore a smiling face,  
And Knowledge was like Fancy  
drest,

And Art with Language lived ingrown,  
The cunning hand and golden  
tongue :

By this the form Divine was shown,  
By that its deathless praises sung.

When in cool temples fair and white,  
By purple sea, or myrtle shade,  
The gods took shape to mortal sight,  
By their own creatures' hands re-  
made.

And daily, to the cheerful noise  
Of wrestling, or the panting race—  
Mid the clear laughter of the boys,  
And tender forms of youthful grace—

Grave sages walked in high debate  
Beneath the laurel grove, and sought  
To solve the mysteries of Fate,  
And sound the lowest deeps of  
Thought ;

Nor knew that they, as those indeed,  
Were naked, taking fair for right ;  
With beauty only for all creed,  
Yet not without some heaven-sent  
light.

Now preaching clear the deathless  
soul ;  
Now winging love from sloughs of  
shame ;  
And oft from earthly vapours foul,  
Soaring aloft with tongues of flame.

Knew they no inward voice to vex  
The careless joyance of their way—  
No pointing finger stern, which checks  
The sad transgressor of to-day ?

Fair dream, if any dream be fair,  
Which knows no fuller life than  
thine ;  
Which only moves through earthly air,  
And builds on shadows half divine ;

How art thou fled ! For us no more  
Dryad or Satyr haunts the grove ;  
No Nereid sports upon the shore,  
Nor with wreathed horn the Tritons  
rove ;

Who breathe a fuller, graver air,  
Long since to manhood's stature  
grown ;

Who leave our childhood's fancies fair,  
For pains and pleasures of our own.

For us no more the young vine climbs,  
Its gadding tendrils flinging down ;  
Who move in sadder, wiser times,  
Whose thorns are woven for a  
crown.

The lily and the passion-flower  
Preach a new tale of gain and loss,  
And in the wood-nymph's closest bower  
The springing branches form the  
Cross.

"A great hope traversing the earth,"  
Has taken all the young world's  
bloom,  
And for the joy and flush of birth,  
Has left the solemn thought of  
doom ;

And made the body no more divine,  
And built our Heaven no longer  
here,  
And given for joyous fancies fine,  
Souls bowed with holy awe and fear.

And far beyond the suns, removed  
The godhead seen by younger eyes,  
Leaving the people once beloved,  
Girt round by dreadful mysteries ;

Fulfilled with thoughts, more fair and  
dear  
Than all the lighter joys of yore,  
Immeasurable hopes brought near,  
And Heaven laid open more and  
more.

But not with love and peace alone  
Time came, which older joys could  
take ;

But with fierce brand and hopeless groan,  
 Red war, the dungeon, and the stake ;

And lives by Heaven too much opprest,  
 And cloisters dim with tears and sighs,  
 And young hearts withered in the breast,  
 And fasts and stripes and agonies ;

And for Apollo breathing strength,  
 And Aphrodité warm with life ;  
 A tortured Martyr come at length,  
 To the last pang of lifelong strife.

While round us daily move no more  
 Those perfect forms of youthful grace,  
 No more men worship as before  
 The rounded limb, the clear-cut face ;

Who see the dwarfed mechanic creep,  
 With hollow cheek, and lungs that bleed,  
 Or the swart savage fathom-deep,  
 Who comes to air, to sleep, and breed.

Aye, but by loom, or forge, or mine,  
 Or squalid hut, there breaks for these  
 Hope more immense, awe more divine  
 Than ever dawned on Sokrates.

Who if they seek to live again  
 In careless lives the pagan charm,  
 May only prove a lifelong pain,  
 For that clear conscience void of harm.

For in the manhood of God's days  
 We live, and not in careless youth ;

The essence more than form we praise,  
 And Beauty moves us less than Truth.

From youth to age ; till cycles hence  
 Another and a higher Spring,  
 And with a truer innocence,  
 Again the world shall think and sing.

## SONG.

I WOULD thou might'st not vex me  
 with thine eyes,  
 Thou fair Ideal Beauty, nor would'st  
 shame  
 All lower thoughts and visions as they  
 rise,  
 As in mid-noon a flame.

For now thy presence leaves no prospect  
 fair,  
 Nor joy in act, nor charm in any  
 maid,  
 Nor end to be desired, for which men  
 dare,  
 Thou making me afraid.

Because life seems through thee a thing  
 too great  
 To spend on these, which else might  
 grow to thee ;  
 So that fast bound, I idly hesitate :  
 I prithee set me free ;

Or, hold me, if thou wilt, but come  
 not near,  
 Let me pursue thee still in ghostly  
 grace ;  
 Far off let me pursue thee, for I fear  
 To faint before thy face.

## AT CHAMBERS.

To the chamber, where now uncaring  
 I sit apart from the strife,  
 While the fool and the knave are sharing  
 The pleasures and profits of life,

There came a faint knock at the door,  
 Not long since on a terrible day ;  
 One faint little knock, and no more ;  
 And I brushed the loose papers away.

And as no one made answer, I rose,  
 With quick step and impatience of  
 look,  
 And a glance of the eye which froze,  
 And a ready voice of rebuke.

But when the door opened, behold !  
 A mother, low-voiced and mild,  
 Whose thin shawl and weak arms enfold  
 A pale little two-year-old child.

What brought her there? Would I  
 relieve her?  
 Was all the poor mother could say ;  
 For her child, scarce recovered from  
 fever,  
 Left the hospital only that day.

Pale, indeed, was the child ; yet so  
 cheerful,  
 That, seeing me wonder, she said,  
 Of doubt and repulse, grown fearful,  
 " Please look at his dear little head ; "

And snatched off the little bonnet,  
 And so in a moment laid bare  
 A shorn little head, and upon it  
 No trace of the newly-come hair.

When, seeing the stranger's eye  
 Grow soft ; of an innocent guile  
 The child looked up, shrinking and shy,  
 With the ghost of a baby smile.

Poor child ! I thought, so soon come  
 To the knowledge of lives oppressed,  
 To whom poverty comes with home,  
 And sickness brings food and rest :

Who art launched forth, a frail little  
 boat,  
 In the midst of life's turbulent sea,  
 To sink, it may be, or to float  
 On great waves that care nothing for  
 thee.

What awaits thee? An early peace  
 In the depths of a little grave,  
 Or, despite all thy ills to increase,  
 Through some dark chance, mighty  
 to save ;

Till in stalwart manhood you meet  
 The strong man, who regards you to-  
 day,  
 Crawling slowly along the street,  
 In old age withered and gray ?

Who knows? But the thoughts I have  
 told  
 In one instant flashed through my  
 brain,  
 As the poor mother, careful of cold,  
 Clasped her infant to her again.

And I, if I searched for my purse,  
 Was I selfish, say you, and wrong ?  
 Surely silver is wasted worse  
 Than in earning the right to a song !

*EVENSONG.*

THE hymns and the prayers were done, and the village church was still,  
As I lay in a waking dream in the churchyard upon the hill.

The graves were all around, and the dark yews over my head,  
And below me the winding stream and the exquisite valley were spread.

The sun was sloping down with a glory of dying rays,  
And the hills were bathed in gold, and the woods were vocal with praise.

But from the deep-set valley there rose a vapour of grey,  
And the sweet day sank, and the glory waxed fainter and faded away.

Then there came, like a chilling wind, a cold, low whisper of doubt,  
Which silenced the echo of hymns, and blotted the glories out.

And I wrestled with powers unseen, and strove with a Teacher divine,  
Like Jacob who strove with the angel, and found with the dawn a sign.

\* \* \* \* \*

For I thought of the words they sang: "It is He that hath made us indeed";  
And my thought flew back to the Fathers of thought and their atheist creed—

How atom with atom at first fortuitously combined,  
Formed all, from the worlds without to the innermost worlds of mind;

And I thought: What, if this be true, and no Maker there is indeed,  
And God is the symbol alone of a feeble and worn-out creed;

And from uncreate atoms, impelled by a blind chance driving on free,  
Grew together the primal forms of all essences that be;

Then a voice: If they were, indeed, they were separate one from one  
By a gulph as broad as yawns in space betwixt sun and sun—

Self-centred and self-contained, disenvioured and isolate;  
Drawn together by a hidden love, torn apart by a hidden hate.

What power was this—chance, will you say? But chance, what else can it mean  
Than the hidden Cause of things by human reason unseen?

Chance! Then Chance were a name for God, or each atom bearing a soul  
Indivisible, like with like, part and whole of the Infinite Whole.

Were God, as the Pantheist taught, God in earth, and in sky, and in air,  
God through every thought and thing, and made manifest everywhere;

The spring and movement of things—the stir, the breathing of breath,  
Without which all things were quenched in the calm of an infinite death;

Or, if within each there lay some germ of an unborn power,  
God planted it first, God quickened, God raised it from seed to flower.

Though beneath the weird cosmical force, which we wield and yet cannot name,  
From the germ or the rock we draw out low gleams of life's faintest flame;

Though we lose the will that commands, and the muscles that wait and serve,  
In some haze of a self-set spring of the molecules of nerve;

Though we sink all spirit in matter, and let the Theogonies die,  
Life and death are; thinker and thought; outward, inward; I, and not I,  
And the I is the Giver of life, and without it the matter must die.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then I ceased for a while from thought, as I lay on the long green grass,  
Hearing echoes of hymns anew, and letting the moments pass.

\* \* \* \* \*

The evening was mounting upward; the sunbeams had left the hill;  
But the dying daylight lingered, and all the valley was still.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then I said: But if God there be, how shall man by his thinking find,  
Who is only a finite creature, the depths of the Infinite Mind—

Who sounds with a tiny plummet, who scans with a purblind eye,  
The depths of that fathomless ocean, the wastes of that limitless sky?

Shall we bow to a fetish, a symbol, which maybe nor sees nor hears;  
Or, seeing and hearing indeed, takes no thought for our hopes or fears;

Who is dumb, though we long for a word; who is deaf, though his children cry;  
Who is Master, yet bears with evil—Lord, and lets all precious things die?

Or if in despair we turn from the godless and meaningless plan,  
What do we, but make for ourselves a God in the image of man—

A creature of love and hate, a creature who makes for good,  
But barred by an evil master from working the things that he would?



If he be not a reflex image, we may not know him at all ;  
 If he be, we are God ourselves—to ourselves we shall stand or fall.

Then the voice : But what folly is this ! Cannot God indeed be known,  
 If we know not the hidden essence that forms Him and builds His throne ?

Is all our knowledge naught, of sea, and of sky, and of star,  
 Till we know them, not as they seem to our thinking, but as they are ?

We who build the whole fabric of knowledge on vague abstractions sublime ;  
 We who whirl through an infinite space, and live in an infinite time ;

We who prate of Motion and Force, not knowing that on either side  
 Black gulphs unavoidable yawn, dark riddles our thought deride ;

Shall we hold our science as naught in all things of earth, because  
 We know but the seemings and shows, the relations, and not the cause—

Not only as he who admires the rainbow and cloud of gold,  
 Knows that 'tis but a form of vapour his wondering eyes behold ;

But as he who sees and knows, and knowing would fain ignore  
 What he knows since the essence of things is hid, and he knows not more—

Or who would not love his love, or walk hand in hand with his friend,  
 Since he sees not the roots of the tree from whose branches life's blossoms depend ?

Or how should the sight we see, any more than the sound we hear,  
 Be a thing which exists for our thought, apart from the eye or the ear ;

Is not every atom of dust, which compacted we call the earth,  
 A miracle baffling our thought with insoluble wonders of birth ?

And know we not, indeed, that the matter which men have taught,  
 Is itself an essence unseen and untouched—but by spirit and thought ?

Tush ! It is but a brain-sick dream. What was it that taught us the laws  
 Which stand as a bar between us and the thought of the Infinite Cause ?

Is He infinite, out of relation, and absolute, past finding out ?  
 Reach we not an antinomy here ? feel we here no striving of doubt ?

How, then, shall the finite define the bounds of the infinite plan,  
This is finite, and infinite this : here is Deity, here is man.

If our judgment be relative only, how then shall our brain transcend  
The limits of relative thought ; grown too eager to comprehend ?

For he passes the bounds of relation, if any there be who can  
Distinguish the absolute God from the relative in man :

He has bridged the gulph ; he has leaped o'er the bound ; he has seen with his eyes  
For a moment the land unseen, that beyond the mountain peaks lies.

Nay ! we see but a part of God, since we gaze with a finite sight ;  
And yet not Darkness is He, but a blinding splendour of light.

Do we shrink from this light, and let our dazzled eyeballs fall ?  
Nay ! a God fully known or utterly dark, were not God at all.

Though we hold not that in some sphere which our thought may never conceive,  
There comes not a time when, to know may be all, and not, to believe ;

Nor yet that the right which we love, and the wrong which we hate to-day,  
May not show as reversed, or as one, when the finite has passed away ;

God we know in our image indeed, since we are in the image of Him,  
Of His splendour a faint low gleam, of His glory a reflex dim.

Bowing not to the all unknown, nor to that which is searched out quite ;  
But to That which is known, yet unknown--to the darkness that comes of light,  
To the contact of God with man, to the struggle and triumph of right.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then I ceased for a while from thought, as I lay on the long green grass,  
Hearing echoes of hymns grown nearer, and letting the moments pass.

Exult, oh dust and ashes ! the low voices seemed to say ;  
And then came a sudden hush, and the jubilation faded away.

The evening was dying now, and the moon-rise was on the hill,  
And the soft light touched the river, and all the valley was still.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then I thought : But if God there be, and our thought may reach Him indeed,  
How should this bare knowledge alone stand in lieu of a fuller creed ?

If He be and is good, as they say, how yet can our judgment approve,  
'Mid the rule of His iron laws, the place of His infinite love?

The rocks are built up of death, earth and sea teem with ravin and wrong ;  
The sole law in Nature we learn, is the law that strengthens the strong.

Through countless ages of time, the Lord has withdrawn Him apart  
From all the world He has made, save the world of the human heart.

Without and within all is pain, from the cry of the child at birth,  
To its parting sigh in age, when it looks for a happier earth.

Should you plead that God's order goes forth with a measured footstep sublime,  
Know you not that you thrust Him back thus to the first beginnings of time,—

That a spark, a moment, a flash, and His work was over and done ;  
And the worlds were sent forth for ever, each circling around its sun.

Bearing with it all secrets of being, all potencies undefined,  
All forms and changes of matter, all growths and achievements of mind.

What is there for our worship in this, and should not our reason say,  
He is, and made us indeed, but hides Him too far away ?

Though He lives, yet is He as one dead ; and we, who would prostrate fall  
Before the light of His Presence, we see not nor know Him at all.

Then the voice : Oh folly of doubt ! what is time that we deem so far,  
What else but a multiple vast of the little lives that are ?

He who lives for the fifty years, which scarce rear thought to its prime,  
Already a measure has lived of a thousand years of time.

Twice this, and Christ spoke not yet, and from this what a span appears,  
The space till our thought is lost in the mists of a million years !

A thousand millions of years—we have leapt with a thought, with a word ;  
To the time when no flutter of life 'neath the shield of the trilobite stirred.

All time is too brief for our thought, and yet we would bring God nigh,  
Till He worked in His creature's sight, man standing undazzled by.

Such a God were not God indeed ; nor, if He should change at all,  
Should we hold, as we hold Him now, the God of both great and small.

How know we the great things from small ? how mark we the adequate cause,  
Which might make the Creator impede the march of His perfect laws,—

We, who know but a part, not the whole ? Or were it a fitting thought  
He should stoop in our sight to amend the errors His hand had wrought,

So His laws were not perfect at all ? or should He amend them indeed,  
How supply by a fitful caprice the want of a normal creed ?

All life is a mode of force, and all force that is force must move ;  
'Tis a friction of Outward and Inward, a contrast of Hatred and Love.

Joy and Grief, Right and Wrong, Life and Death, Finite, Infinite, Matter and  
Will,  
These are the twin wheels of the Chariot of Life, which without them stood still.

Would you seek in an order reversed and amended a Hand divine ?  
Nay the Wonder of wonders lies in unchangeable design.

Should God break His law as He might ; should He stoop from His infinite skies  
To redress that which seems to us wrong, to raise up the life that dies ;

Should He save from His wolf His lamb, from His tiger His innocent child ;  
Should He quench the fierce flames, or still the great waves clamouring wild,

I think a great cry would go up from an orderless Universe,  
And all the fair fabric of things would wither, as under a 'course.

'Tis the God of the savage, is this. What do we who rise by degrees  
To the gift of the mind that perceives, and the gift of the eye that sees ?

Does not all our nature tend to a law of unbending rule,  
Till equity comes but to mend the law that was made by the fool ?

Who shows highest ?—the child or the savage, whose smiles change to rage or  
to tears ?  
Or the statesman moving, unmoved, through a nation's desires and fears ?

Or the pilgrim whose eyes look onward, as if to a distant home,  
Never turning aside from his path, whatever allurements may come ?

All Higher is more Unmoved ; and the more unbroken the law,  
The more sure does the Giver show to the eyes of a wondering awe.

Nor is it with all of truth that they make their voices complain,  
Who weary our thought with tales of a constant ruin and pain.

It is but a brain-sick dream that would gloat o'er the hopeless bed,  
Or the wreck, or the crash, or the fight, with their tales of the dying and dead.

Pain comes ; hopeless pain, God knows and we know, again and again ;  
But even pain has its intervals blest, when 'tis heaven to be free from pain.

And I think that the wretch who lies pressed by a load of incurable ill,  
With a grave pity pities himself, but would choose to have lived to it still ;

And, as he whom the tiger bears in his jaws to his blood-stained den  
Feels no pain nor fear, but a wonder, what comes in the wonderful " Then,"

He pities himself and yet knows, as he casts up life's chequered sum,  
It were best on the whole to have lived, whatever calamity come.

And the earth is full of joy. Every blade of grass that springs ;  
Every cool worm that crawls content as the eagle on soaring wings ;

Every summer day instinct with life ; every dawn when from waking bird  
And morning hum of the bee, a chorus of praise is heard ;

Every gnat that sports in the sun for his little life of a day ;  
Every flower that opens its cup to the dews of a perfumed May ;

Every child that wakes with a smile, and sings to the ceiling at dawn ;  
Every bosom which knows a new hope stir beneath its virginal lawn ;

Every young soul, ardent and high, rushing forth into life's hot fight ;  
Every home of happy content, lit by love's own mystical light ;

Every worker who works till the evening, and earns before night his wage,  
Be his work a furrow straight-drawn, or the joy of a bettered age ;

Every thinker who, standing aloof from the throng, finds a high delight  
In striking with tongue or with pen a stroke for the triumph of right ;—

All these know that life is sweet ; all these, with a consonant voice,  
Read the legend of Time with a smile, and that which they read is, " Rejoice ! "

\* \* \* \* \*

Then again I ceased from thought, as I lay on the long green grass,  
Hearing hymns which grew fuller and fuller, and letting the moments pass.

Exult, oh dust and ashes ! exult and rejoice ! they said,  
For blessed are they who live, and blessed are they who are dead.

Then again they ceased and were still, and my thought began once more,  
But touched with a silvery gleam of hopes that were hidden before ;

The moon had climbed up the clear sky, far above the black pines on the hill,  
And the river ran molten silver, and all the valley was still.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then I said : But if God there be, who made us indeed and is good,  
What guide has He left for our feet to walk in the ways that He would ?

For though He should speak indeed, yet, as soon as His voice grew dumb,  
It were only through human speech that the message it bore might come,

Sunk to levels of human thought, and always marred and confined  
By the chain of a halting tongue, and the curse of a finite mind ;

So that he who would learn, indeed, what precepts His will has taught,  
Must dim with a secular learning the brightness his soul has sought.

Who can tell how those scattered leaves through gradual ages grew,  
Adding chaff and dust from the world to the accents simple and true ?

If one might from the seer's wild visions, or stories of fraud and blood,  
Or lore of the world-worn Sultan, discern the sure voice of good,

Such a mind were a God to itself ; or if you should answer, For each  
God has set a sure mentor within, with power to convince and teach ;

Yet it speaks with a changeful voice, which alters with race and clime,  
Nay, even in the self-same lands is changed with the changes of time ;

So that 'twixt the old Europe of story and that which we know to-day,  
Yawns a gulph, as wide almost as parts us from far Cathay ;

What power has such voice to help us ? Or if we should turn instead  
To the precious dissonant pages, which keep what the Teacher said ;

How reduce them to one indeed, or how seek in vain to ignore  
The forgotten teachers who taught His counsels of mercy before ?

Not "an eye for an eye" alone, was the rule which they loved to teach,  
But Mercy, and Pity, and Love, though they spoke with a halting speech,

And He spake with the tongue of those who had spoken and then were dumb,  
And clothed in the words of the Law, which He loved, would His precepts  
come ;

Other teachers have drawn more millions, who follow more faithful than we ;  
Other teachers have taught a rule as stern and unselfish as He.

If we shrink from the Caliph fierce, who carved out a faith with his sword,  
What say we of the pilgrim who sways the old East with his gentle word ?

Or what of the sage whose vague thoughts, over populous wastes of earth,  
Have led millions of fettered feet to the grave from the day of birth ?

Or how can we part indeed, the show, the portent, the sign,  
From the simple words which glow with the light of a teaching Divine ?

And if careless of these, as of growths which spring up and bear fruit and fall,  
Yet how shall our thought accept the crowning wonder of all ?

Yet if this we reject, wherein, doth our faith and assurance lie ?  
What is it to us that God lives, we who live for a little and die ;

Or why were it not more wise to live as the beasts of to-day,  
Taking life, while it lasts, as a gift, and secure of the future as they ?

Then the voice : Oh, disease of doubt ! now I seem to hold you indeed,  
Keeping fast in my grasp at length the sum of your dreary creed.

How else should man prove God's will, than through methods of human thought ?

How else than through human words should he gather the things that he ought ?

If the Lord should speak day by day from Sinai, mid clouds and fire,  
Should we hear 'mid those thunders loud the still voices which now inspire ?

Would not either that awful sound, like that vivid and scorching blaze,  
Confuse our struggling thought, and our tottering footsteps amaze ?

Or, if it should peal so clear that to hear were to obey indeed,  
'Twere a thing of dry knowledge alone, not one of a faithful creed ;

No lantern for erring feet, but a glare on a white, straight road,  
Where life struggled its weary day, to sink before night with its load ;

Where the blinded soul might long for the shade of a cloud of doubt,  
And yearn for dead silence, to blot that terrible utterance out.

Yet God is not silent indeed ; not seldom from every page —  
From the lisping story of old to the seer with his noble rage ;

From the simple life divine, with its accents gentle and true,  
To the thinker who formed by his learning and watered the faith as it grew ;

All are fired by the Spirit of God. Nor true is the doubt you teach,  
That God speaks not to all men the same, but differs 'twixt each and each.

Each differs from each a little, with difference of race and of clime ;  
Each is changed, but not transformed, with the onward process of time ;

Each nation, each age, has its laws, whereto it shall stand or fall,  
But built on a wider Law, which is under and over them all.

Nor doubt we that from Western wilds to the long-sealed isles of Japan,  
There runs the unbroken realm of a Law that is common to man.

Not as ours shows the law they obey, and yet it is one and the same,  
Though it comes in a varying shape, and is named by another name.

Not so shall your doubt prevail ; nor if any should dream to-day,  
By praise of Jew or of Greek, to dissolve His glory away,



Can they hold that God left His world with no gleam of glory from Him,  
No light clouds edged with splendour, no radiance of Godhead dim.

Others were before Christ had come. Oh ! dear dead Teacher, whose word,  
Long before the sweet voice on the Hill, young hearts had quickened and stirred ;

Who spak'st of the soul and the life ; with limbs chilled by the rising death,  
Yielding up to thy faith, with a smile, the last gasp of thy earthly breath ;—

And thou, oh golden-mouthed sage, who with brilliance of thought as of tongue,  
Didst sing of thy Commonwealth fair, the noblest of epics unsung ;

In whose pages thy Master's words shine forth, sublimed and refined  
In the music of perfect language, inspired by a faithful mind ;—

And ye seers of Israel and doctors, whose breath was breathed forth to move  
The dry dead bones of the Law with the life of a larger love ;—

Or thou, great Saint of the East, in whose footsteps the millions have trod  
Till from life, like an innocent dream, they pass'd and were lost in God ;—

And thou, quaint teacher of old, whose dead words, though all life be gone,  
Through the peaceful Atheist realms keep the millions labouring on ;—

Shall I hold that ye, as the rest, spake no echo of things divine,  
That no gleam of a clouded sun through the mists of your teaching may shine ?

Nay ; such thoughts were to doubt of God. Yet, strange it is and yet sure,  
No teacher of old was full of mercy as ours, or pure.

'Twixt the love that He taught, and the Greek with his nameless, terrible love,  
Yawns a gulph as wide as parts hell beneath and heaven above ;

'Twixt His rule of a Higher Mercy and that which the Rabbi taught,  
Lies the gulph between glowing Act and barren ashes of Thought.

For the pure thought smirched and fouled, or buried in pedant lore,  
He brought a sweet Reason of Force, such as man knew never before.

What to us are the men of the East, though they preach their own Gospel  
indeed ?

We are men of the West, and shall stand or fall by a Western creed.

Though we see in those Scriptures antique, faint flames of Diviner fire,  
Who would change to Buddha from Christ, as a change from lower to higher?

Nay! He is our Teacher indeed. Little boots it to-day to seek  
To arraign, with a laboured learning, the words that men heard Him speak;

To cavil, to carp, to strive, through the mists of an age-long haze,  
To dim to a common light the star which could once amaze;

To fix by some pigmy canon, too short for the tale of to-day,  
The facts of a brief life, fled eighteen centuries away;

To mark by a guess, and to spurn, as born of a later age,  
The proofs which, whenever writ, bear God's finger on every page;

Or to sneer at the wonders they saw Him work, or believed they saw;  
We who know that unbending sequence is only a phase of law,

No wonder which God might do if it rested on witness of men,  
Would turn to it our thought of to-day as it turned the multitudes then.

Nor proved would avail a whit if the teaching itself were not pure;  
Nor if it were pure as His would make it one whit more sure.

And for the great Wonder of all. If any there be who fears  
That the spark of God in his breast may be quenched in a few short years;

Who feels his faith's fire blaze aloft more clear than it burnt before,  
By the thought of the empty tomb and the stone rolled back from the door:

For him was the miracle done. If no proof makes clearer to me  
Than His word to my inner sense, the Higher life that shall be;

If no Force that has once leapt forth can ever decline and fall,  
From the dead forces stirring the worlds, to the Life-force which dominates all;

But the sum of life is the same, and shall be when the world is done,  
As it was when its first faint spark was stirred by the kiss of the sun;—

If I feel a sure knowledge within, which shall never be blotted out,  
A Longing, a Faith, a Conviction, too strong for a Whisper of Doubt

That my life shall be hid with a Lord, who shall do the thing that is best—  
To be purged, it may be, long time, or taken at once to rest,—

To live, it may be, myself ; from all else, individual, sole,  
Or blended with other lives, or sunk in the Infinite whole—

Though I doubt not that that which is I may endure in the ages to be,  
Since I know not what bars hold apart the Not-Me and the mystical Me ;—

How else than thro' Him do I grasp the faith that for Greek and Jew  
Was hidden, or but dimly seen, which nor Moses nor Sokrates knew ?

Ay ! He is our Teacher indeed. He is risen, and we shall rise ;  
But if only as we He rose, not the less He lives in the skies.

And if those who proclaim Him to day in the dim gray lands of the East,  
Prove him not by portent or sign, not by trick or secret of priest ;

But for old cosmogonies dead, and faint precepts too weak for our need,  
Offer God brought nearer to man in a living and glowing creed.

The pure teaching, the passionate love, taking thought for the humble and weak,  
The pitiful scorn of wrong, which His Scriptures everywhere speak,

Not writ for the sage in his cell, but preached 'mid the turmoil and strife,  
And touched with a living brand from the fire of the Altar of Life.

So, of all the wonders they tell, no wonder our hearts has stirred  
Like the Wonder which lives with us still in a living and breathing Word.

More than portents, more than all splendours of rank loyal hearts devise,  
More than visions of heavenly forms caught up and lost in the skies,

This the crowning miracle shows, before which we must prostrate fall ;  
For this is the living voice of the Lord and Giver of all.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then I ceased again from thought, as I lay on the long grave-grass,  
Thrilled through by a music of hymns, and letting the moments pass.

"Exult and rejoice" ! they sang in high unison, now combined  
Which were warring voices before, the voices of heart and mind.

The earth was flooded with light, over valley and river and hill,  
And this is the hymn which I heard them sing, while the world lay still :

"Exult, oh dust and ashes ! Rejoice, all ye that are dead !  
For ye live too who lie beneath, as we live who walk overhead.

As God lives, so ye are living ; ye are living and moving to-day,  
Not as they live who breathe and move, yet living and conscious as they.

And ye too, oh living, exult. Young and old, exult and rejoice ;  
For the Lord of the quick and the dead lives for ever : we hear His voice.

We have heard His voice, and we hear it sound wider and more increased,  
To the sunset plains of the West from the peaks of the furthest East.

For the quick and the dead, it was given ; for them it is sounding still,  
And no pause of silence arrests the clear voice of the Infinite Will.

Not only through Christ long since, and the teachers of ages gone,  
But to-day He speaks, day by day, to those who are toiling on ;

More clear perhaps then, to the ear, and with nigher voice and more plain,  
But still the same Teacher Divine, speaking to us again and again.

For I like not his creed, if any there be, who shall dare to hold  
That God comes to us only at times far away in the centuries old.

Not so ; but He dwells with us still ; and maybe, though I know not indeed,  
He will send us a Christ again, with a fuller and perfecter creed—

A Christ who shall speak to all men, East and West, and North and South,  
Till the whole world shall hear and believe the gracious words of His mouth.

When knowledge has pierced through the wastes, chaining earth together and sea,  
And the bars of to-day are lost in the union of all that shall be ;

And the brotherhood that He loved is more than a saintly thought,  
And the wars and the strifes which we mourn are lost in the peace He taught ;

Then Christ coming shall make all things new. Or it may be that ages of pain  
Shall quench the dim light of to-day, bringing back the thick darkness again.

And then, slow as the tide which flows on though each wave may seem to  
recede,  
Man advances again and again to the Rock of a higher creed.

Or it may be no teacher shall come down again with God in his face,  
But the light which before was reflected from One shall shine on the race.

And as this wide earth grows smaller, and men to men nearer draw,  
There may spring from the root of the race the flower of a nobler law,

Growing fairer, and still more fair ; or maybe, through long ages of time,  
Man shall rise up from type to type, to the strength of an essence sublime,

Removed as far in knowledge, in length of life, and in good  
From us, as we from the mollusc which gasped in the first warm flood,—

A creature so wise and so high that he scorns all allurements of ill,  
Marching on through an ordered life in the strength of a steadfast will.

Who knows? But, however it be, we live, and shall live indeed,  
In ourselves or in others to come. What more doth our longing need?

Hid with God, or on earth, we shall see, burning brighter and yet more bright,  
The sphere of humanity move throughout time on its pathway of light ;

Circling round with a narrower orbit, as age upon age fleets away,  
The Centre of Force and of Being, the Fountain of Light and of Day,

'Till, nearer drawn, and more near, at last it shall merge and fall  
In its source ; man is swallowed in God, the Part is lost in the All ;

One more world is recalled to rest, one more star adds its fire to the sun,  
One light less wanders thro' space, and the story of man is done ! "

\* \* \* \* \*

Then slowly I rose to go from my place on the long grave-grass,  
Where so long I had lain in deep thought, and letting the moments pass :

A great light was flooding the plains of the earth and the uttermost sky,  
The low church and the deep-sunk vale, and the place where one day I shall lie,

The fresh graves of those we have lost, the dark yews with their reverend gloom,  
And the green wave which only marks the place of the nameless tomb ;

And thro' all the clear spaces above—oh wonder ! oh glory of Light !—  
Came forth myriads on myriads of worlds, the shining host of the night,—

The vast forces and fires that know the same sun and centre as we ;  
The faint planets which roll in vast orbits round suns we shall never see ;

The rays which had sped from the first, with the awful swiftness of light,  
To reach only then, it might be, the confines of mortal sight :

Oh, wonder of Cosmical Order ! oh, Maker and Ruler of all,  
Before whose Infinite greatness in silence we worship and fall !

Could I doubt that the Will which keeps this great Universe steadfast and sure  
Might be less than His creatures thought, full of goodness, pitiful, pure ?

Could I dream that the Power which keeps those great suns circling around,  
Took no thought for the humblest life which flutters and falls to the ground ?

"Oh, Faith ! thou art higher than all." Then I turned from the glories above,  
And from every casement new-lit there shone a soft radiance of love :

Young mothers were teaching their children to fold little hands in prayer ;  
Strong fathers were resting from toil, 'mid the hush of the Sabbath air ;

Peasant lovers strolled thro' the lanes, shy and diffident, each with each,  
Yet knit by some subtle union too fine for their halting speech :

Humble lives, to low thought, and low ; but linked, to the thinker's eye,  
By a bond that is stronger than death, with the lights of the ultimate sky :

Here as there, the great drama of life rolled on, and a jubilant voice  
Thrilled through me ineffable, vast, and bade me exult and rejoice ;

Exult and rejoice, oh soul ! sang my being to a mystical hymn  
As I passed by the cool bright wolds, as I threaded my pinewoods dim ;

Rejoice and be sure ! as I passed to my fair home under the hill,  
Wrapt round with a happy content,—and the world and my soul were still !

## SONG.

BEAM on me, fair Ideal, beam on me !  
Too long thou hast concealed thee in  
a cloud ;  
Mine is no vision strong to pierce to  
thee,  
Nor voice complaining loud,  
Whereby thou mightest find thy dear,  
and come  
To thine own heart, and long-expecting  
home.

Too long thou dost withdraw thee from  
mine eyes ;  
Too long thou lingerest. Ah, truant  
sweet !  
Dost thou no reckoning take of all my  
sighs,  
While Time with flying feet  
Speeds onward, till the westering sun  
sinks low—  
With cruel feet so swift and yet so  
slow ?

Time was I thought that thou wouldst  
come a maid

White-armed, with deep blue eyes  
and sunny head ;

But, ah ! too long the lovely vision  
stayed.

And then, when this was fled,  
Fame, with blown clarion clear, and  
wide-spread wings,  
Fame, crown and summit of created  
things.

And then in guise of Truth, when this  
grew faint,

Truth in Belief and Act, and Life  
and Thought,

White-robed and virginal, a pure cold  
saint,

Thou cam'st awhile, long sought ;  
But only in glimpses camest thou, so I  
Watch wearily until thou passest by.

I wait, I watch, I hunger, though I  
know

Thou wilt not come at all who stay'st  
so long.

My hope has lost its strength, my heart  
its glow ;

I grow too cold for song :

Long since I might have sung, hadst thou  
come then,

A song to echo through the souls of men.

Yet, since 'tis better far to dream in  
sleep,

Than wholly lose the treacheries of  
time,

I hold it gain to have seen thy garments  
sweep

On the far hills sublime :

Still will I hope thy glorious face to  
see,—

Beam on me, fair Ideal, beam on me !

# AT LAST.

LET me at last be laid

On that hillside I know which scans  
the vale,

Beneath the thick yews' shade,  
For shelter when the rains and winds  
prevail.

It cannot be the eye  
Is blinded when we die,  
So that we know no more at all

The dawns increase, the evenings fall ;  
Shut up within a mouldering chest of  
wood

Asleep, and careless of our children's  
good.

Shall I not feel the spring,  
The yearly resurrection of the earth,  
Stir thro' each sleeping thing  
With the fair throbbings and alarms of  
birth,

Calling at its own hour  
On folded leaf and flower,  
Calling the lamb, the lark, the bee,  
Calling the crocus and anemone,  
Calling new lustre to the maiden's eye,  
And to the youth love and ambition  
high ?

Shall I no more admire  
The winding river kiss the daisied plain ?  
Nor see the dawn's cold fire  
Steal downward from the rosy hills  
again ?

Nor watch the frowning cloud,  
Sublime with mutterings loud,  
Burst on the vale, nor eves of gold,  
Nor crescent moons, nor starlights cold,  
Nor the red casements glimmer on the  
hill

At Yule-tides, when the frozen leas  
are still ?

Or should my children's tread  
Through Sabbath twilights, when the  
    hymns are done,  
Come softly overhead,  
Shall no sweet quickening through  
    my bosom run,  
Till all my soul exhale  
Into the primrose pale,  
And every flower which springs above  
Breathes a new perfume from my love ;  
And I shall throb, and stir, and thrill  
    beneath  
With a pure passion stronger far than  
    death ?

Sweet thought ! fair, gracious dream,  
Too fair and fleeting for our clearer  
    view !  
How should our reason deem  
That those dear souls, who sleep  
    beneath the blue  
In rayless caverns dim,  
'Mid ocean monsters grim,  
Or whitening on the trackless sand,  
Or with strange corpses on each hand  
In battle-trench or city graveyard lie,  
Break not their prison-bonds till time  
    shall die ?

Nay, 'tis not so indeed.  
With the last fluttering of the failing  
    breath  
The clay-cold form doth breed  
A viewless essence, far too fine for  
    death ;  
And ere one voice can mourn,  
On upward pinions borne,  
They are hidden, they are hidden, in  
    some thin air,  
Far from corruption, far from care,  
Where through a veil they view their  
    former scene,  
Only a little touched by what has been.

Touched but a little ; and yet,  
Conscious of every change that doth  
    befal,  
By constant change beset,  
The creatures of this tiny whirling  
    ball,  
Filled with a higher being,  
Dowered with a clearer seeing,  
Risen to a vaster scheme of life,  
To wider joys and nobler strife,  
Viewing our little human hopes and  
    fears  
As we our children's fleeting smiles and  
    tears.

Then, whether with fire they burn  
This dwelling-house of mine when I am  
    fled,  
And in a marble urn  
My ashes rest by my beloved dead,  
Or in the sweet cold earth  
I pass from death to birth,  
And pay kind Nature's life-long debt  
In heart's-ease and in violet—  
In charnel-yard or hidden ocean wave,  
Where'er I lie, I shall not scorn my  
    grave.

## SONG.

LOVE-SIGHS that are sighed and spent  
    in vain,  
Ah ! folly, folly,  
Thou dost transmute into a precious  
    pain,  
Sweet melancholy.  
Ah ! folly, folly,  
Ah ! fair melancholy,  
Sweeter by far thy mild remedial pain,  
Than if fierce hope should rise and  
    throb again.



High hopes of glory sunk to naught,  
 Ah ! folly, folly,  
 And deep perplexities of baffled thought  
 Thou healest, melancholy.  
 Ah ! folly, folly,  
 Ah ! sweet melancholy,  
 Thou dost bear with thee a balm un-  
     sought,  
 To heal the wounds of love and pride  
     and thought.

Yet thou art a trivial cure for ill,  
 Pale melancholy,  
 Fitting best a feebler brain and will,  
 Ah ! folly, folly,  
 Ay, sweet melancholy,  
 Folly art thou, folly.  
 Who only may not trivial ills endure  
 Will to thy pharmacy entrust his cure.

Since thou shalt not heal the wounds I  
     know,  
 Pale melancholy,  
 I will seek if any comfort grow  
 In jovial folly,  
 Ah ! folly, folly,  
 Worse than melancholy,  
 No other cure there is for Fortune's  
     smart  
 Than a soul self-contained, and a proud  
     innocent heart !

### THE DIALOGUE.

UNTO my soul I said,  
     " Oh, vagrant soul !  
 When o'er my living head  
     A few years roll,  
 Is't true that thou shalt fly  
 Far away into the sky,  
 Leaving me in my place  
 Alone with my disgrace ?

" For thou wilt stand in the East,  
     The night withdrawn,  
 White-robed as is a priest,  
     At the door of dawn ;  
 While I within the ground,  
 In misery fast bound,  
 Shall lie, blind, deaf, and foul,  
 Since thou art fled, O soul."

Then said my soul to me :  
     " Thy lot is best ;  
 For thou shalt tranquil be,  
     Sunk deep in rest,  
 While naked I shall know  
 The intolerable glow  
 When as, the sun, shall rise  
 A fire in fiery skies.

" Thou shalt lie cool and dark,  
     Forgetting all ;  
 I shall float shamed and stark,  
     Till the sun fall :  
 Thou shalt be earth in earth,  
 Preparing for new birth ;  
 While me in the heaven fierce,  
 Pure glories fright and pierce."

Then said I to my soul,  
     And she to me :  
 " Where'er life's current roll  
     We twain shall be,  
 Part here and part not here,  
 Partners in hope and fear,  
 Until, our exile done,  
 We meet at last in one."

### THE BIRTH OF VERSE.

BLIND thoughts which occupy the  
     brain,  
 Dumb melodies which fill the ear,  
 Dim perturbations, precious pain,  
 A gleam of hope, a chill of fear,—

These seize the poet's soul, and mould  
The ore of fancy into gold.

And first no definite thought there is  
In all that affluence of sound,  
Like those sweet formless melodies  
Piped to the listening woods around,  
By birds which never teacher had  
But love and knowledge : they are glad.

Till, when the chambers of the soul  
Are filled with inarticulate airs,  
A spirit comes which doth control  
The music, and its end prepares ;  
And, with a power serene and strong,  
Shapes these wild melodies to song.

Or haply, thoughts which glow and  
burn  
Await long time the fitting strain,  
Which, swiftly swelling, seems to turn  
The silence to a load of pain ;  
And somewhat in him seems to cry,  
" I will have utterance, or I die ! "

Then of a sudden, full, complete,  
The strong strain bursting into sound,  
Words come with rhythmic rush of feet,  
Fit music girds the language round,  
And with a comeliness unsought,  
Appears the winged, embodied thought.

But howsoever they may rise,  
Fit words and music come to birth ;  
There soars an angel to the skies,  
There walks a Presence on the earth—  
A something which shall yet inspire  
Myriads of souls unborn with fire.

And when his voice is hushed and  
dumb,  
The flame burnt out, the glory dead,

He feels a thrill of wonder come  
At that which his poor tongue has  
said ;  
And thinks of each diviner line—  
" Only the hand that wrote was mine."

### SONG.

Oh ! were I rich and mighty,  
With store of gems and gold,  
And you, a beggar at my gate,  
Lay starving in the cold ;  
I wonder, could I bear  
To leave you pining there ?

Or, if I were an angel,  
And you an earth-born thing,  
Beseeching me to touch you  
In rising with my wing ;  
I wonder should I soar  
Aloft, nor heed you more ?

Or, dear, if I were only  
A maiden cold and sweet,  
And you, a humble lover,  
Sighed vainly at my feet ;  
I wonder if my heart  
Would know no pain or smart ?

### THE ENIGMA.

THE gaslights flutter and flare  
On the cruel stones of the street,  
And beneath in the sordid glare  
Pace legions of weary feet ;  
Fair faces that soon shall grow hard,  
Shy glances already grown bold,  
The wrecks of a girlhood marred  
By shame and hunger and cold.

But here, as she passes along,  
 Is one whose young cheek still shows,  
 'Mid the pallid, pitiful throng,  
 The fresh bloom of a tender rose.  
 Not long has she walked with vice,  
 A recruit to the army of Ill,  
 A fresh lamb for the sacrifice  
 That steams up to Moloch still.

And the spell through which youth  
 draws all,  
 The faint shyness in hurrying walk,  
 The lithe form slender and tall,  
 The soft burr in her simple talk,  
 Constrains the grave passer, whose brain  
 Is long leagues of fancy apart,  
 To thrill with a sudden pain  
 And an emptiness of heart.

Poor child ! since it is not long  
 Since you were indeed but a child,  
 A gay thing of bird-like song,  
 And even as a bird is wild ;  
 With no shadow of thought or care,  
 Laughing all the sweet hours away,  
 When every morning was fair,  
 And every season a May.

Through the red fallow on the hill  
 The white team laboured along,  
 While you roamed the green copses at  
 will,  
 And mimicked the cuckoo's song ;  
 While they tossed and carried the hay,  
 While the reapers were hid in the  
 wheat,  
 You had only to laugh and to play,  
 Or to bathe in the brook your feet.

For your mother left you a child,  
 Your rough father's pride and joy :  
 Rejoiced that his girl was as wild  
 And fearless as any boy.

Though you would not plunder the  
 nest,  
 Nor harry the shrieking hare,  
 You could gallop hare-backed with the  
 best,  
 And knew where the orchises were.

" Like a boy " was what they said,  
 With your straight limbs and fearless  
 face ;  
 Like a girl in the golden head,  
 Gay fancies, and nameless grace.  
 Like a boy in high courage and all  
 Quick forces, and daring of will ;  
 Like a girl in the peril to fall,  
 And innocent blindness to ill.

And even now, on the sordid street,  
 As you pass by the theatre door,  
 You bring with you some freshness  
 sweet  
 Of the brightness and breezes of  
 yore.  
 Not yet are the frank eyes grown bold,  
 Not yet have they lost all their joy ;  
 Not yet has time taken the gold  
 From the short crisp curls of the  
 boy.

And if truly a boy's they were,  
 Not thus would he pace forlorn ;  
 Nor would careless passers-by dare  
 To shoot out the lips of scorn.  
 Is it Nature or man that makes  
 An unequal judgment arraign  
 Those whose equal nature takes  
 The mark of the self-same stain ?

Leaving this one, shame and disgrace ;  
 Leaving that one, honour and fame ;  
 To this one, confusion of face,  
 To that one, a stainless name :

A high port and respect and wealth  
For the one who is guilty indeed,  
While the innocent walks by stealth  
Through rough places with feet that  
bleed.

Do I touch a deep ulcer of Time,  
A created or ultimate ill,  
A primal curse or a crime,  
Self-inflicted through ignorance still?  
But meanwhile, poor truant, you come  
With a new face year after year,  
Leaving innocence, freedom, and home  
For these dens of weeping and fear.

To decline by a swift decay,  
To a thing so low and forlorn,  
That, for all your fresh beauty to-day,  
It were better you never were born;  
Or to find in some rare-sent hour,  
As a lily rooted in mire,  
Love spring with its pure white flower  
From the lowest depths of desire.

Heaven pity you! So little turns  
The stream of our lives from the  
right;  
So like is the flame that burns  
To the hearth that gives warmth and  
light;  
So fine the impassable fence,  
Set for ever 'twixt right and wrong,  
Between white lives of innocence  
And dark lives too dreadful for song.

*TO THE TORMENTORS.*

DEAR little friend, who, day by day,  
Before the door of home  
Art ready waiting till thy master come,  
With monitory paw and noise,  
Swelling to half delirious joys,

Whether my path I take  
By leafy coverts known to thee before,  
Where the gay coney loves to play,  
Or the loud pheasant whirls from out  
the brake  
Unharm'd by us, save for some frolic  
chase,  
Or innocent panting race;  
Or who, if by the sunny river's side  
Haply my steps I turn,  
With loud petition constantly dost  
yearn  
To fetch the whirling stake from the  
warm tide;  
Who, if I chide thee, grovellest in the  
dust,  
And dost forgive me, though I am  
unjust,  
Blessing the hand that smote: who  
with fond love  
Gazest, and fear for me, such as doth  
move  
Those finer souls which know, yet may  
not see,  
And are wrapped round and lost in  
ecstasy;—

And thou, dear little friend and soft,  
Breathing a gentle air of hearth and  
home;  
Whose low purr to the lonely ear doth  
oft  
With deep refreshment come;  
Though thy quick nature is not frank  
and gay  
As that one's, yet with graceful play  
Thou dost beguile the evenings, and  
dost sit  
With mien demurely fit;  
With half-closed eyes, as in a dream  
Responsive to the singing steam,  
Most delicately clean and white,  
Thou baskest in the flickering light;

<p>Quick-tempered art thou, and yet, if a child Molest thee, pitiful and mild ; And always thy delight is, simply neat, To seat thee faithful at thy master's feet ;—</p> <p>And thou, good friend and strong, Who art the docile labourer of the world ; Who groanest when the battle mists are curled On the red plain ; who toilest all day long To make our gain or sport ; who art the care That cleanses idle lives, which, but for thee And thy pure, noble nature, perhaps might sink To lower levels, born of lust and - drink, And half-forgotten sloughs of infamy, Which desperate souls could dare ; — And ye, fair timid things, who lightly play By summer woodlands at the close of day ;— What are ye all, dear creatures, tame or wild ? What other nature yours than of a child, Whose dumbness finds a voice mighty to call, In wordless pity, to the souls of all Whose lives I turn to profit, and whose mute And constant friendship links the man and brute ? Shall I consent to raise A torturing hand against your few and evil days ?</p>	<p>Shall I indeed delight To take you, helpless kinsmen, fast and bound, And while ye lick my hand Lay bare your veins and nerves in one red wound, Divide the sentient brain ; And while the raw flesh quivers with the pain, A calm observer stand, And drop in some keen acid, and watch it bite The writhing life : wrench the still beating heart, And with calm voice meanwhile dis- course, and bland, To boys who jeer or sicken as they gaze, Of the great Goddess Science and her gracious ways ?</p> <p>Great Heaven ! this shall not be, this present hell, And none denounce it ; well I know, too well, That Nature works by ruin and by wrong, Taking no care for any but the strong, Taking no care. But we are more than she ; We touch to higher levels, a higher love Doth through our being move : Though we know all our benefits bought by blood, And that by suffering only reach we good ; Yet not with mocking laughter, nor in play, Shall we give death or carve a life away.</p>
--	--

And if it be indeed  
For some vast gain of knowledge, we  
    might give  
These humble lives that live,  
And for the race should bid the victim  
    bleed,  
Only for some great gain,  
Some counterpoise of pain ;  
And that with solemn soul and grave,  
Like his who from the fire 'scapes, or  
    the flood,  
Who would save all, ay, with his heart's  
    best blood,  
But of his children chooses which to save!

Surely a man should scorn  
To owe his weal to others' death and  
    pain?  
Sure 'twere no real gain  
To batten on lives so weak and so  
    forlorn?  
Nor were it right indeed  
To do for others what for self were  
    wrong.  
'Tis but the same dead creed,  
Preaching the naked triumph of the  
    strong ;  
And for this Goddess Science, hard and  
    stern,  
We shall not let her priests torment and  
    burn :  
We fought the priests before, and not  
    in vain ;  
And as we fought before, so will we  
    fight again.

CHILDREN OF THE STREET.

BRIGHT boys vociferous,  
Girl-children clamorous,  
Shrill trebles echoing,  
Down the long street ;

Every day come they there,  
Afternoon foul or fair,  
Shouting and volleying ;  
Through wintry winds and cold,  
Through summer eves of gold,  
Running and clamouring :  
Never a day but brings,  
Ragged and thinly clad,  
Battling with poverty,  
Hunger, and wretchedness,  
Brave little souls forlorn,  
Gaining hard bread.  
" Terrible accident ;  
Frightful explosion, Sir ;  
News from Australia,  
News from America ;  
Only one halfpenny,  
Special edition, Sir,  
*Echo, Sir, Echo !*"

Thus they shout breathlessly,  
Dashing and hurrying,  
Threading the carriages,  
Under the rapid feet ;  
Frightening the passer-by,  
Down the long street :  
On till they chance to meet  
Some vague philosopher.

\* \* \*

And straightway the hurry,  
And bustle, and noise,  
Fade away in his thought  
Before tranquil joys.  
Here are problems indeed,  
Not to solve, it is true,  
But on every side filling  
The fanciful view ;  
Which ere he has grasped them  
Are vanished and gone,  
But leave him in solitude  
Never alone :  
Thoughts of Fate, and of Life,  
And the end of it all,

Of the struggle and strife  
 Where few rise, many fall ;  
 Thoughts of Country and Empire,  
 Of Future and Past,  
 And the centuries gliding  
 So slow, yet so fast :  
 Old fancies, yet strange,  
 Thoughts sad and yet sweet,  
 Of lives come to harvest,  
 And lives incomplete ;  
 Of the lingering march,  
 Of the Infinite plan,  
 Bringing slowly, yet surely,  
 The glory of man ;  
 Of our failures and losses,  
 Our victory and gain ;  
 Of our treasure of hope  
 And our Present of pain.  
 And, higher than all,  
 That these young voices teach  
 A glowing conviction  
 Too precious for speech ;  
 That somewhere down deep  
 In each natural soul  
 Sacred verities sleep,  
 Holy waterfloods roll ;  
 That to young lives untaught,  
 Without friend, without home,  
 Some gleams of a light  
 That is heavenlier come ;  
 That to toil which is honest  
 A voice calls them still,  
 Which is more than the tempter's  
 And stronger than ill.

For, poor souls, 'twere better,  
 If pleasure were all,  
 Not to strive thus and labour,  
 But let themselves fall ;  
 They might gain, for a time,  
 Higher wages than this,  
 And that sharp zest of sinning  
 The innocent miss ;

They might know fuller life,  
 And, should fortune befriend,  
 Escape the Law's pains  
 From beginning to end ;  
 Or, if they should fail,  
 What for them does home bring  
 Which should make of a prison  
 So dreadful a thing ?  
 These children, whom formalists,  
 Narrow and stern,  
 Have denied what high principle  
 Comes from to learn ;  
 To whom this great empire,  
 Whose records they cry,  
 Is a book sealed as close  
 As the ages gone by ;  
 Who bear a name great  
 Among nations of earth,  
 But are English alone  
 By the fortune of birth ;  
 These young mouths that come  
 To a board well-nigh bare,  
 Who elsewhere were riches,  
 But here a grave care.

Great Empire ! fast bound  
 By invisible bands,  
 That convey to earth's limits  
 Thy rulers' commands ;  
 Who sittest alone  
 By thy rude northern sea,  
 On an ocean-built throne,  
 The first home of the free,  
 Whom thy tall chimneys shroud  
 In a life-giving gloom ;  
 Who clothest mankind  
 With the work of thy loom ;  
 Who o'er all seas dost send out  
 Thy deep-laden ships ;  
 Who teachest all nations  
 The words of thy lips ;  
 Who despatchest thy viceroys  
 Imperially forth

To the palms of thy East  
 And the snows of thy North ;  
 Who governest millions  
 Of dark subtle men  
 By the might of just laws  
 And the sword of the pen ;  
 Who art planted wherever  
 A white foot may tread,  
 On the poisonous land  
 Which for ages lies dead ;  
 Who didst nourish the freeman  
 With milk from thy breast,  
 To the measureless Commonwealth  
 Lording the West ;  
 Who holdest to-day  
 Of those once subject lands  
 A remnant too mighty  
 For weaklier hands ;  
 Who in thy isle-continent,  
 Yearly increased,  
 Rearest empires of freemen  
 To sway the far East ;  
 Who art set on lone islets  
 Of palm and of spice,  
 On deserts of sand  
 And on mountains of ice ;  
 Who bring'st Freedom wherever  
 Thy flag is unfurled :  
 The exemplar, the envy,  
 The crown of the World !

What is't thou dost owe  
 To these young lives of thine,  
 What else but to foster  
 This dim spark divine ?  
 Think of myriads like these,  
 Without teaching or home,  
 Who with pitiful accents  
 Beseeching thee come ;  
 Think how Time, whirling on,  
 Time that never may rest,  
 Brings the strength of the loins  
 And the curve of the breast,

Till, with poor minds still childish,  
 These children are grown  
 To the age that shall give them  
 Young lives of their own ;  
 Think of those, who to-day  
 In the sweet country air  
 Live, as soulless, almost,  
 As the birds which they scare ;  
 Think of all those for whom,  
 To the immature brain,  
 The dull whirr of the loom  
 Brings a throbbing of pain ;  
 Think of countless lives fallen,  
 Sunk, never to rise,  
 For the lack of the warning  
 Their country denies,—  
 Fallen, ruined, and lost,  
 Through all time that shall be,  
 Fallen for ever and lost  
 To themselves and to thee ;—  
 Thou who standest, girt round  
 By strong foes on each side,  
 Foes who envy thy greatness,  
 Thy glory, thy pride ;  
 Thou, who surely shalt need  
 Heart and soul, brain and hand,  
 Brain to plan, hand to bleed,  
 For thy might, O dear land !

\* \*

Till, while slowly he ponders  
 These thoughts in his brain,  
 See ! there swiftly comes rushing  
 A young troop again.

“ Terrible accident ;  
 Frightful explosion, Sir ;  
 News, Sir, from Germany ;  
 Latest from India ;  
 Special edition, Sir,  
 Only one half-penny ! ”



Thus the revoluble  
Assonant *Echo*.

Again they rush breathlessly ;  
Dashing and hurrying,  
Frighting the passer-by,  
Shouting and volleying,  
Bright boys vociferous,  
Girl-children clamorous,  
On till they meet again  
Some vague philosopher.

### SOULS IN PRISON.

I THOUGHT that I looked on the land  
of the lost,

A stony desert, arid and bare,  
Gray under a heavy air.

Not a bird was there, nor a flower, nor  
a tree,  
Nor rushing river, nor sounding sea ;  
And I seemed to myself like a ghost.

A land of shadows, a herbless plain,  
A faint light aslant on the barren  
ground,  
And never a sight nor a sound :

Only at times, of invisible feet,  
Wearily tracking one dull, sad beat,  
Too spiritless to complain ;

And of faces hid by a blank white mask,  
From which there glared out cavernous  
eyes,  
Full of hate and revolt and lies :

As if the green earth on which others  
live  
Had nothing of hope or of fear to give  
But a hopeless, perpetual task.

Far in the distance a vast gray pile  
Stretched out its spider-like, echoing  
ways

In long centrifugal rays ;

And sometimes dimly I seemed to see  
Dumb gangs of poor workers, fruitless<sup>1</sup>—  
Bent in hard tasks useless and vile,

To which, issuing silent, in single rank,  
Along narrow pathways stony and blank  
The hopeless toilers would come.

Or else each was idly cooped in a cell  
Narrow, and gloomy, and hard, as hell,  
Which was all that they knew of home.

And around them frowning, grimy and  
tall,

With no ivy or lichen, a circling wall  
Shut God and life utterly out ;

And in the midst, with unclosing eye,  
A muffled watcher stood silently,  
As they paced about and about.

Never alone—for, wherever they went,  
From some central tower an eye was  
bent  
Along all the long, straight-drawn  
ways.

Never alone—for an unseen eye,  
As the stealthy footstep went noiselessly  
by,  
Swept each lonely cell with its gaze.

Always alone—for in all the throng  
No word or glance as they shuffled  
along  
But the order-word, sharp and loud.

Always alone—for in all the crowd  
No glance of comfort from pitying eyes  
Might pierce through the thick disguise.

Nor, if husband were there, or child, or  
wife,  
Could the subtle communion of love  
and life  
Escape that terrible eye.

Yet husbands and wives and children  
there were,  
Young limbs, and age bent in a dumb  
despair,  
Too strong or too weak to die.

Nothing remained, as it seemed, but  
thought  
Of the old hopes vanished and come to  
nought,  
And the hopeless, perpetual care,—

Nought but to sit, as the night would  
fall,  
Tracing black ghosts on the blank  
white wall  
In a silent rage of despair ;

Or, before the dull daylight began to  
break,  
To start at the iron-tongued summons  
and wake  
To the curse of another day.

And so, in silence, to brood and plot  
To regain the poor freedom and life  
which were not,  
Though it bartered a soul away ;

Or, later, to cherish the old offence  
With a secret lurking devil of sense,  
And a spring of desire self-bent,

Till at last all longing was sunk and  
spent  
In a lifeless, fathomless slough of con-  
tent.

Not repentance, nor fear, nor grief,

Nor belief at all, nor yet unbelief ;  
But a soul which skulks from itself like  
a thief,

And is damned for ever and dead.

\* \* \* \*

Thus I thought to myself ; and, though  
straight I saw

It was only the house of retributive  
Law,

I shuddered and shrank, and fled.

A SEPARATION DEED.

WHEREAS we twain, who still are  
bound for life,

Who took each other for better and for  
worse,

Are now plunged deep in hate and bitter  
strife,

And all our former love is grown a  
curse ;

So that 'twere better, doubtless, we  
should be

In loneliness, so that we were apart,  
Nor in each other's changed eyes look-  
ing, see

The cold reflection of an alien heart :  
To this insensate parchment we reveal  
Our joint despair, and seal it with our  
seal.

Forgetting the dear days not long ago,  
When we walked slow by starlight  
through the corn :

Forgetting, since our hard fate wills  
it so,

All but our parted lives and souls  
 forlorn ;  
 Forgetting the sweet fetters strong to  
 bind  
 Which childish fingers forge and baby  
 smiles,  
 Our common pride to watch the grow-  
 ing mind,  
 Our common joy in childhood's simple  
 wiles,  
 The common tears we shed, the kiss  
 we gave,  
 Standing beside the open little grave ;

Forgetting these and more, if to forget  
 Be possible, as we would fain indeed.  
 And if the past be not too deeply set  
 In our two hearts, with roots that,  
 touched, will bleed  
 Yet, could we cheat by any pretext fair  
 The world, if not ourselves—'twere so  
 far well—

We would not put our bonds from us,  
 and bare  
 To careless eyes the secrets of our hell ;  
 So this indenture witnesseth that we,  
 As follows here, do solemnly agree.

We will take each our own, and will  
 abide  
 Separate from bed and board for all  
 our life ;  
 Whatever chance of weal or woe betide,  
 Naught shall re-knit the husband and  
 the wife.  
 Though one grow gradually poor and  
 weak,  
 The other, lapt in luxury, will not  
 heed ;  
 Though one, in mortal pain, the other  
 seek,  
 The other may not answer to the need ;

We, who through long years did to-  
 gether rest  
 In wedlock, heart to heart, and breast  
 to breast.

One shall the daughter take, and one  
 the boy,—  
 Poor boy, who shall not hear his  
 mother's name,  
 Nor feel her kiss ; poor girl, for whom  
 the joy  
 Of her sire's smile is changed for sullen  
 shame :

Brother and sister, who, if they should  
 meet,  
 With faces strange, amid the careless  
 crowd,  
 Will feel their hearts beat with no  
 quicker beat,  
 Nor inward voice of kinship calling  
 loud :  
 Two widowed lives, whose fulness may  
 not come ;  
 Two orphan lives, knowing but half of  
 home.

We have not told the tale, nor will,  
 indeed,  
 Of dissonance, whether cruel wrong or  
 crime,  
 Or sum of petty injuries which breed  
 The hate of hell when multiplied by  
 time,  
 Dishonour, falsehood, jealous fancies,  
 blows,  
 Which in one moment wedded souls  
 can sunder ;  
 But, since our yoke intolerable grows,  
 Therefore we set our seals and souls as  
 under :  
 Witness the powers of Wrong and  
 Hate and Death.  
 And this Indenture also witnesseth.

## SONG.

THEY mount from glory to glory,  
They sink from deep unto deep,  
They proclaim their sweet passionate  
story,

They tremble on chords that weep,  
And with them my soul spreads her  
wings,  
And my heart goes out to them and  
sings.

And chord within chord interlaces,  
Like the leaves that protect some  
fair bloom ;  
And with subtle and tremulous graces,  
And tender lights dappled with  
gloom,  
Like the fall of an ocean-borne bell,  
The harmonies quicken and swell.

Then swift from those languishing voices  
And accents which marry and die,  
Like the sound of a trumpet, rejoices  
One clear note unfaltering, high,  
And my soul, through its magical power,  
Bursts and dies like an aloe in flower.

## FREDERIC.

As these sheets came in from the  
printer,  
My lad who had brought me them  
said,  
“ Please, Sir, as I passed his office,  
They told me that Frederic was  
dead.”

And I knew in a moment thrill through  
me,  
A keen little sorrow and smart,

Then a sudden revolt and rebellion  
Assail me and fetter my heart,

As he went on with boyish prattle,  
Before I had courage to speak :  
“ He died of consumption, they said,  
Sir ;  
And he earned sixteen shillings a  
week.”

“ How old was he ? ” “ Just seventeen,  
Sir :  
He had grown very tall and white.”  
And I thought of the childish features,  
The bright cheeks, and eyes still more  
bright,

When, withdrawn from his school far  
too early,  
He came with his treasured prize,  
To show to his new-found master,  
With a simple pride in his eyes ;

And how it soon proved that his writing  
Was so clear, and skilful, and fine,  
That I set him the task to decipher  
The hieroglyphs which are mine.

’Twas four years ago, and so splendid  
Did my first book of songs appear,  
That, though oftentimes already rejected,  
I sent them forth then without fear.

Nor in vain. For now many minds  
know them,  
And many are kindly in praise,  
But the cold little hand that adorned  
them  
Has cast up the sum of its days !

Sixteen shillings ! this pittance could  
purchase  
The flower of those boyish years !

This could give to that humble ambition  
Dull entries, whose total is tears !

Poor young life which was bursting to  
blossom,  
Which had borne its own fruitage  
one day,  
Had those budding years mingled  
together  
Slow labour with healthfuller play !

Is it man that has done this, or rather,  
These dead blasts that blow, blow,  
blow, blow,  
Week by week, month by month, till  
beneath them  
Life withers and pulses beat slow ?

The dull winds that to-day are slaying  
Young and old with their poisonous  
breath,  
Which slew the rash singer who praised  
them,  
Not the less with a premature death.

Is it man with bad laws and fools'  
customs,  
False pride, poverty, ignorant greed ?  
Is it God making lives for His pleasure,  
Dooms these innocent victims to  
bleed ?

Great riddle which one day shall be  
clearer,  
Be our doubts with all reverence  
said ;  
But a strong power constrained me to  
write them,  
When I heard little Frederic was  
dead.

## TO MY MOTHERLAND.

DEAR motherland, forgive me, if too  
long  
I hold the halting tribute of my song ;  
Letting my wayward fancy idly roam  
Far, far from thee, my early home.  
There are some things too near,  
Too infinitely dear  
For speech ; the old ancestral hearth,  
The hills, the vales that saw our birth,  
Are hallowed deep within the reverent  
breast :  
And who of these keeps silence, he is  
best.

Yet would not I appear,  
Who have known many a brighter land  
and sea  
Since first my boyish footsteps went  
from thee,  
The less to hold thee dear ;  
Or lose in newer beauties the immense  
First love for thee, O birth-land, which  
fulfils  
My inmost heart and soul,—  
Love for thy smiling and sequestered  
vales,  
Love for thy winding streams which  
sparkling roll  
Through thy rich fields, dear Wales,  
From long perspectives of thy folded  
hills.

Ay ! these are sacred, all ;  
I cannot sing of them, too near they are.  
What if from out thy dark yews, gazing  
far,  
I sat and sang, Llangunnor ! of the  
vale  
Through which fair Towy winds her  
lingering fall,

Gliding by Dynevor's wood-crowned  
steep,  
And, alternating swift with deep,  
By park and tower a living thing  
Of loveliness meandering ;  
And traced her flowing, onward still,  
By Grongar dear to rhyme, or Drys-  
llwyn's castled hill,  
Till the fresh upward tides prevail,  
Which stay her stream and bring the  
sea-borne sail,  
And the broad river rolls majestic down  
Beneath the gray walls of my native  
town.

Would not my fancy quickly stray  
To thee, sea-girl St. David's, far away,  
A minster on the deep ; or, further  
still,  
To you, grand mountains, which the  
stranger knows :  
Eryri throned amid the clouds and  
snows,  
The dark lakes, the wild passes of the  
north ;  
Or Cader, a stern sentinel looking forth  
Over the boisterous main ; or thee,  
dear Isle  
Not lovely, yet which canst my thought  
beguile—  
Mona, from whose fresh wind-swept  
pastures came  
My grandsire, bard and patriot, like in  
name  
Whose verse his countrymen still love  
to sing  
At bidding-feast or rustic junketing ?  
  
Ah, no ! too near for song, and ye too  
near,

My brethren of the ancient race and  
tongue ;  
The bardic measures deep, the sweet  
songs sung  
At congresses, which far the sacred fire  
Which did of old your ancestors inspire ;  
The simple worship sternly pure,  
The faith unquestioning and sure,  
Which doth the priest despise and his  
dark ways,  
And riseth best to fullest praise  
Beneath some humble roof-tree, rude  
and bare,  
Or through the mountains' unpolluted  
air ;  
Who know not violence nor blood,  
And who, if sometimes ye decline from  
good,  
Sin the soft sins which gentler spirits  
move,  
Which warmer Fancy breeds, and too  
much love.

I may not sing of you,  
Or tell my love—others there are who  
will,  
Who haply bear not yet a love so true  
As that my soul doth fill—  
If to applause it lead, or gain, or fame ;  
Better than this it were to bear the  
pain  
Which comes to higher spirits when  
they know  
They fire in other souls no answering  
glow ;  
Love those who love me not again,  
And leave my country naught, not even  
a name.

# THE EPIC OF HADES.

## BOOK I.

### *TARTARUS.*

IN February, when the dawn was slow,  
And winds lay still, I gazed upon the  
fields  
Which stretched before me, lifeless,  
and the stream  
Which laboured in the distance to the  
sea,  
Sullen and cold. No force of fancy  
took  
My thought to bloomy June, when all  
the land  
Lay deep in crested grass, and through  
the dew  
The landrail brushed, and the lush  
banks were lit  
With strawberries, and the hot noise  
of bees  
Wooded the chaste flowers. Rather I  
seemed to move  
Thro' that weird land, Hellenic fancy  
feigned,  
Beyond the fabled river and the bark  
Of Charon ; and forthwith on every side  
Rose the thin throng of ghosts.  
First thro' the gloom  
Of a dark grove I strayed—a sluggish  
wood,  
Where scarce the faint fires of the  
setting stars,  
Or some cold gleam of half-discovered  
dawn,

Might pierce the darkling pines. A  
twilight drear  
Brooded o'er all the depths, and filled  
the dank  
And sunken hollows of the rocks with  
shapes  
Of terror,—beckoning hands and noise-  
less feet  
Flitting from shade to shade, wide eyes  
that stared  
With horror, and dumb mouths which  
seemed to cry,  
Yet cried not. An ineffable despair  
Hung over them and that dark world  
and took  
The gazer captive, and a mingled pang  
Of grief and anger, grown to fierce  
revolt  
And hatred of the Invisible Force  
which holds  
The issue of our lives and binds us fast  
Within the net of Fate ; as the fisher  
takes  
The little quivering sea-things from the  
sea  
And flings them gasping on the beach  
to die  
Then spreads his net for more. And  
then again  
I knew myself and those, creatures who  
lie

Safe in the strong grasp of Unchanging  
 Law,  
 Encompassed round by hands unseen,  
 and chains  
 Which do support the feeble life that  
 else  
 Were spent on barren space ; and thus  
 I came  
 To look with less of horror, more of  
 thought,  
 And bore to see the sight of pain that  
 yet  
 Should grow to healing, when the con-  
 crete stain  
 Of life and act were purged, and the  
 cleansed soul,  
 Renewed by the slow wear and waste  
 of time,  
 Soared after æons of days.  
 They seemed alone,  
 Those prisoners, thro' all time. Each  
 soul shut fast  
 In its own jail of woe, apart, alone,  
 For evermore alone ; no thought of  
 kin,  
 Or kindly human glance, or fellowship  
 Of suffering or of sin, made light the  
 load  
 Of solitary pain. Ay, though they  
 walked  
 Together, or were prisoned in one cell  
 With the partners of their wrong, or  
 with strange souls  
 Which the same Furies tore, they knew  
 them not,  
 But suffered still alone ; as in that  
 shape  
 Of hell, fools build on earth, where  
 hopeless sin  
 Rots slow in solitude, nor sees the  
 face  
 Of men, nor hears the sound of speech,  
 nor feels

The touch of human hand, but broods  
 a ghost,  
 Hating the bare blank cell—the other  
 self,  
 Which brought it thither—hating man  
 and God,  
 And all that is or has been.

A great fear  
 And pity froze my blood, who seemed  
 to see

A half-remembered form.

An Eastern King  
 It was who lay in pain. He wore a  
 crown

Upon his aching brow, and his white  
 robe

Was jewelled with fair gems of price,  
 the signs

Of pomp and honour and all luxury,  
 Which might prevent desire. But as I  
 looked

There came a hunger in the gloating  
 eyes,

A quenchless thirst upon the parching  
 lips,

And such unsatisfied strainings in the  
 hands

Stretched idly forth on what I could  
 not see,

Some fatal food of fancy ; that I knew  
 The undying worm of sense, which frets  
 and gnaws

The unsatisfied stained soul.

Seeing me, he said :  
 "What? And art thou too damned  
 as I? Dost know

This thirst as I, and see as I the cool  
 Lymph drawn from thee and mock  
 thy lips ; and parch



<p>For ever in continual thirst ; and mark          The fair fruit offered to thy hunger              fade          Before thy longing eyes? I thought              there was          No other as I thro' all the weary              lengths          Of Time the gods have made, who              pined so long          And found fruition mock him.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Long ago,</p> <p>When I was young on earth, 'twas a              sweet pain          To ride all day in the long chase, and              feel          Toil and the summer fire my blood and              parch          My lips, while in my father's halls I              knew          The cool bath waited, with its marble              floor ;          And juices from the ripe fruits pressed,              and chilled          With snows from far-off peaks ; and              troops of slaves ;          And music and the dance ; and fair              young forms,          And dalliance, and every joy of              sense,          That haunts the dreams of youth, which              strength and ease          Corrupt, and vacant hours. Ay, it              was sweet          For a while to plunge in these, as fair              boys plunge          Naked in summer streams, all veil of              shame          Laid by, only the young dear body              bathed          And sunk in its delight, while the firm              earth,          The soft green pastures gay with inno-              cent flowers,</p>	<p>Or sober harvest fields, show like a              dream ;          And nought is left, but the young life              which floats          Upon the depths of death, to sink,              maybe,          And drown in pleasure, or rise at length              grown wise          And gain the abandoned shore.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ah, but at last</p> <p>The swift desire burns stronger and              more strong,          And feeding on itself, grows tyrannous ;          And the parched soul no longer finds              delight          In the cool stream of old ; nay, this              itself,          Smitten by the fire of sense as by a              flame,          Holds not its coolness more ; and              fevered limbs,          Seeking the fresh tides of their youth,              may find          No more refreshment, but a cauldron              fired          With the fires of nether hell ; and a              black rage          Usurps the soul, and drives it on to              slake          Its thirst with crime and blood.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Longing Desire !</p> <p>Unsatisfied, sick, impotent Desire !          Oh, I have known it ages long. I              knew          Its pain on earth ere yet my life had              grown          To its full stature, thro' the weary              years          Of manhood, nay, in age itself ; I              knew          The selfsame weary thirst, unsatisfied          By all the charms of sense, by wealth              and power</p>
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And homage; always craving, never  
quenched—  
The undying curse of the soul! The  
ministers  
And agents of my will drave far and  
wide  
Over all lands and seas, seeking to  
find  
Fresh pleasures for me, who had spent  
my sum  
Of pleasure, and had power, not even  
in thought,  
Nor faculty to enjoy. They tore apart  
The sacred claustral doors of home for  
me,  
Defiled the inviolate hearth for me,  
laid waste  
The flower of humble lives, in hope to  
heal  
The sickly fancies of the King, till rose  
A cry of pain from all the land; and I  
Grew happier for it, since I held the  
power  
To quench desire in blood.

But even thus  
The old pain faded not, but swift again  
Revived; and thro' the sensual dull  
lengths  
Of my seraglios I stalked, and marked  
The glitter of the gems, the precious  
webs  
Plundered from every clime by cruel  
wars  
That strewn the sands with corpses;  
lovely eyes  
That looked no look of love, and fired  
no more  
Thoughts of the flesh; rich meats, and  
fruits, and wines  
Grown flat and savourless; and loathed  
them all,  
And only cared for power; content to  
shed

Rivers of innocent blood, if only thus  
I might appease my thirst. Until I  
grew  
A monster gloating over blood and  
pain.

Ah, weary, weary days, when every  
sense  
Was satisfied, and nothing left to slake  
The parched unhappy soul, except to  
watch  
The writhing limbs and mark the slow  
blood drip,  
Drop after drop, as the life ebbed with  
it;  
In a new thrill of lust, till blood itself  
Palled on me, and I knew the fiend I  
was,  
Yet cared not—I who was, brief years  
ago,  
Only a careless boy lapt round with  
ease,  
Stretched by the soft and stealing tide  
of sense  
Which now grew red; nor ever dreamed  
at all  
What Furies lurked beneath it, but had  
shrunk  
In indolent horror from the sight of  
tears  
And misery, and felt my inmost soul  
Sicken with the thought of blood.  
There comes a time  
When the insatiate brute within the  
man,  
Weary with wallowing in the mire,  
leaps forth  
Devouring, and the cloven satyr-hoof  
Grows to the rending claw, and the  
lewd leer  
To the horrible fanged snarl, and the  
soul sinks  
And leaves the man a devil, all his sin

Grown savourless, and yet he longs to  
sin  
And longs in vain for ever.

Yet, methinks,  
It was not for the gods to leave me  
thus.

I stinted not their worship, building  
shrines

To all of them; the Goddess of Love I  
served

With hecatombs, letting the fragrant  
fumes

Of incense and the costly steam ascend  
From victims year by year; nay, my  
own son

Pelops, my best beloved, I gave to  
them

Offering, as he must offer who would  
gain

The great gods' grace, my dearest.

I had gained  
Through long and weary orgies that  
strange sense

Of nothingness and wasted days which  
blights

The exhausted life, bearing upon its  
front

Counterfeit knowledge, when the bitter  
ash

Of Evil, which the sick soul loathes,  
appears

Like the pure fruit of Wisdom. I had  
grown

As wizards seem, who mingle sensual  
rites

And forms impure with murderous  
spells and dark

Enchantments; till the simple people  
held

My very weakness wisdom, and  
believed

That in my blood-stained palace-halls,  
withdrawn,

I kept the inner mysteries of Zeus  
And knew the secret of all Being; who  
was

A sick and impotent wretch, so sick,  
so tired,

That even bloodshed palled.

For my stained soul,  
Knowing its sin, hastened to purge  
itself

With every rite and charm which the  
dark lore

Of priestcraft offered to it. Spells  
obscene,

The blood of innocent babes, sorceries  
foul

Muttered at midnight—these could  
occupy

My weary days; till all my people  
shrank

To see me, and the mother clasped her  
child

Who heard the monster pass.

They would not hear,  
They listened not—the cold ungrateful  
gods—

For all my supplications; nay, the  
more

I sought them were they hidden.

At the last  
A dark voice whispered nightly:

'Thou, poor wretch,  
That art so sick and impotent, thyself  
The source of all thy misery, the great  
gods

Ask a more precious gift and excel-  
lent

Than alien victims which thou prizest  
not

And givest without a pang. But shouldst  
thou take

Thy costliest and fairest offering,  
'Twere otherwise. The life which thou  
hast given

Thou mayst recall. Go, offer at the  
 shrine  
 Thy best beloved Pelops, and appease  
 Zeus and the averted gods, and know  
 again  
 The youth and joy of yore.'  
Night after night,
 While all the halls were still, and the  
 cold stars  
 Were fading into dawn, I lay awake  
 Distraught with warring thoughts, my  
 throbbing brain  
 Filled with that dreadful voice. I had  
 not shrunk  
 From blood, but this, the strong son of  
 my youth—  
 How should I dare this thing? And  
 all day long  
 I would steal from sight of him and  
 men, and fight  
 Against the dreadful thought, until the  
 voice  
 Scared all my burning brain, and cla-  
 moured, 'Kill!  
 Zeus bids thee, and be happy.' Then  
 I rose  
 At midnight, when the halls were still,  
 and raised  
 The arras, and stole soft to where my  
 son  
 Lay sleeping. For one moment on his  
 face  
 And stalwart limbs I gazed, and marked  
 the rise  
 And fall of his young breast, and the  
 soft plume  
 Which drooped upon his brow, and  
 felt a thrill  
 Of yearning; but the cold voice urging  
 me  
 Burned me like fire. Three times I  
 gazed and turned  
 Irresolute, till last it thundered at me,

'Strike, fool! thou art in hell; strike,  
 fool! and lose  
 The burden of thy chains.' Then with  
 slow step  
 I crept as creeps the tiger on the deer,  
 Raised high my arm, shut close my eyes,  
 and plunged  
 My dagger in his heart.  
And then, with a flash,
 The veil fell downward from my life  
 and left  
 Myself to me—the daily sum of sense—  
 The long continual trouble of desire—  
 The stain of blood blotting the stain of  
 lust—  
 The weary foulness of my days, which  
 wrecked  
 My heart and brain, and left me at the  
 last  
 A madman and accursed; and I knew,  
 Far higher than the sensual slope which  
 held  
 The gods whom erst I worshipped, a  
 white peak  
 Of Purity, and a stern voice pealing  
 doom—  
 Not the mad voice of old—which  
 pierced so deep  
 Within my life, that with the reeking  
 blade  
 Wet with the heart's blood of my child  
 I smote  
 My guilty heart in twain.  
Ah! fool, to dream
 That the long stain of time might fade  
 and merge  
 In one poor chrism of blood. They  
 taught of yore,  
 My priests who flattered me—nor knew  
 at all  
 The greater God I know, who sits afar  
 Beyond those earthly shapes, passion-  
 less, pure,

And awful as the Dawn--that the gods  
 cared  
 For costly victims, drinking in the  
 steam  
 Of sacrifice when the choice hecatombs  
 Were offered for my wrong. Ah no!  
 there is  
 No recompense in these, nor any charm  
 To cleanse the stain of sin, but the long  
 wear  
 Of suffering, when the soul which  
 seized too much  
 Of pleasure here, grows righteous by  
 the pain  
 That doth redress its ill. For what is  
 Right  
 But equipoise of Nature, alternating  
 The Too Much and Too Little? Not  
 on earth  
 The salutary silent forces work  
 Their final victory, but year on year  
 Passes, and age on age, and leaves the  
 debt  
 Unsatisfied, while the o'erburdened  
 soul  
 Unloads itself in pain.

Therefore it is  
 I suffer as I suffered ere swift death  
 Set me not free, no otherwise; and yet  
 There comes a healing purpose in my  
 pain  
 I never knew on earth; nor ever here  
 The once-loved evil grows, only the  
 tale  
 Of penalties grown greater hourly  
 dwarfs  
 The accomplished sum of wrong. And  
 yet desire  
 Pursues me still--sick, impotent desire,  
 Flarer than that of earth.

We are ourselves  
 Our heaven and hell, the joy, the  
 penalty,

The yearning, the fruition. Earth is  
 hell  
 Or heaven, and yet not only earth; but  
 still,  
 After the swift soul leaves the gates of  
 death,  
 The pain grows deeper and less mixed,  
 the joy  
 Purer and less alloyed, and we are  
 damned  
 Or blest, as we have lived."

He ceased, with a wail  
 Like some complaining wind among  
 the pines  
 Or pent among the fretful ocean caves,  
 A sick, sad sound.

Then as I looked, I saw  
 His eyes glare horribly, his dry parched  
 lips  
 Open, his weary hands stretch idly  
 forth  
 As if to clutch the air--infinite pain  
 And mockery of hope. "Seest thou  
 them now?"

He said. "I thirst, I parch, I famish,  
 yet  
 They still elude me, fair and tempting  
 fruit  
 And cooling waters. Now they come  
 again.  
 See, they are in my grasp, they are at  
 my lips,  
 Now I shall quench me. Nay, again  
 they fly  
 And mock me. Seest thou them, or  
 am I shut  
 From hope for ever, hungering, thirst-  
 ing still,  
 A madman and in Hell?"

And as I passed  
 In horror, his large eyes and straining  
 hands  
 Froze all my soul with pity.

Then it was  
A woman whom I saw : a dark pale  
Queen,  
With passion in her eyes, and fear and  
pain  
Holding her steadfast gaze, like one  
who sees  
Some dreadful deed of wrong worked  
out and knows  
Himself the cause, yet now is powerless  
To stay the wrong he would.  
Seeing me gaze  
In pity on her woe, she turned and spake  
With a low wailing voice—  
"Thou well mayst gaze  
With horror on me, sir, for I am lost ;  
I have shed the innocent blood, long  
years ago,  
Nay, centuries of pain. I have shed  
the blood  
Of him I loved, and found for recom-  
pense  
But self-inflicted death and age-long  
woe,  
Which purges not my sin. And yet  
not I  
It was who did it, but the gods, who  
took  
A woman's loveless heart and tortured it  
With love as with a fire. It was not I  
Who slew my love, but Fate. Fate  
'twas which brought  
My love and me together, Fate which  
barred  
The path of blameless love, yet set  
Love's flame  
To burn and smoulder in a hopeless  
heart,  
Where no relief might come.

The King was old,  
And I a girl. 'Tis an old tale which  
runs  
Thro' the sad ages, and 'twas mine.  
He had spent  
His sum of love long since, and I—I  
knew not  
A breath of Love as yet. Ah, it is  
strange  
To lose the sense of maidenhood, drink  
deep  
Of life to the very dregs, and yet not  
know  
A flutter of Love's wing. Love takes  
no thought  
For pomp, or palace, or respect of men ;  
Nor always in the stately marriage bed,  
Closed round by silken curtains, laid  
on down,  
Nestles a rosy form ; but 'mid wild  
flowers  
Or desert tents, or in the hind's low  
cot,  
Beneath the aspect of the unconscious  
stars,  
Dwells all night and is blest.  
My love, my life !  
He was the old man's son, a fair white  
soul—  
Not like the others, whom the fire of  
youth  
Burns like a flame and hurries un-  
restrained  
Thro' riotous days and nights, but  
virginal  
And pure as any maid. No careless  
glance  
He deigned for all the maidens young  
and fair  
Who sought their Prince's eye. But  
evermore,  
On the high pastures wandering alone,  
He dwelt unwed ; weaving to Artemis,

Fairest of all Olympian maids, a wreath  
 From the unpolluted meads, where  
     never herd  
 Drives his white flock, nor ever scythe  
     has come,  
 But the bee sails upon unfettered wing  
 Over the spring-like lawns, and Purity  
 Waters them with soft dews ; \* and  
     yet he showed  
 Of all his peers most manly—heart and  
     soul  
 A very man, tender and true, and strong  
 And pitiful, and in his limbs and mien  
 Fair as Apollo's self.

It was at first  
 In Træzen that I saw him, when he came  
 To greet his sire. Amid the crowd of  
     youths  
 He showed a Prince indeed ; yet knew  
     I not  
 Whom 'twas I saw, nor that I held the  
     place  
 Which was his mother's, only from the  
     throng  
 Love, with a barbed dart aiming, pierced  
     my heart  
 Ere yet I knew what ailed me. Every  
     glance  
 Fired me ; the youthful grace, the tall  
     straight limbs,  
 The swelling sinewy arms, the large  
     dark eyes  
 Tender yet full of passion, the thick  
     locks  
 Tossed from his brow, the lip and cheek  
     which bore  
 The down of early manhood, seemed  
     to feed  
 My heart with short-lived joy.

For when he stood  
 Forth from the throng and knelt before  
     his sire, \*

\* Euripides, "Hippolytus," lines 70-78.

Then raised his gaze to mine, I felt the  
     curse

Of Aphrodité burn me, as it burned  
 My mother before me, and I dared not  
     meet

His innocent, frank young eyes.

Said I then young ?

Ay, but not young as mine. But I had  
     known

The secret things of life, which age the  
     soul

In a moment, writing on its front their  
     mark

'Too early ripe ;' and he was innocent,  
 My spouse in fitted years, within whose  
     arms

I had defied the world.

I turned away  
 Like some white bird that leaves the  
     flock, which sails

High in mid air above the haunts of  
     men,

Feeling some little dart within her  
     breast,

Not death, but like to death, and slowly  
     sinks

Down to the earth alone, and bears her  
     hurt

Unseen, by herbless sand and bitter  
     pool,

And pines until the end.

Even from that day  
 I strove to gain his love. Nay, 'twas  
     not I,

But the cruel gods who drove me. Day  
     by day

We were together ; for in days of old  
 Women were free, not pent in gilded  
     jails

As afterwards, but free to walk alone,  
 For good or evil, free. I hardly took  
 Thought for my spouse, the King. For  
     I had found

My love at last: what matter if it  
were  
A guilty love? Yet love is love indeed,  
Stronger than heaven or hell. Day  
after day  
I set myself to tempt him from his  
proud  
And innocent way, for I had spurned  
aside  
Care for the gods or men—all but my  
love.

What need to tell the tale? Was it  
a sigh,  
A blush, a momentary glance, which  
brought  
Assurance of my triumph? It is long  
Since I have lived, I cannot tell; I  
know  
Only the penalty of death and hell  
Which followed on my sin. I knew he  
loved.  
It was not wonderful, seeing that we  
dwelt  
A boy and girl together. I was fair,  
And Eros fired my eyes and lent my  
voice  
His own soft tremulous tones. But  
when our souls  
Trembled upon the verge, and fancy  
feigned  
His arms around me as we fled alone  
To some free land of exile, came a  
scroll;  
'Dearest, it may not be; I fear the  
Gods;  
We dare not do this wrong. I go from  
hence  
And see thy face no more. Farewell!  
Forget  
The love we may not own; go, seek for  
both  
Forgiveness from the gods.'

When I read the words,  
The cruel words, methought my heart  
stood still,  
And when the ebbing life returned I  
seemed  
To have lost all thought of Love. Only  
Revenge  
Dwelt with me still, the fiercer that I  
knew  
My long-prized hope, which came so  
near success,  
Snatched from me and for ever.

When I rose  
From my deep swoon, I had a mes-  
senger  
Go, seek the King for me. He came  
and sat  
Beside my couch, and all the doors  
were closed,  
And all withdrawn. Then with the  
liar's art,  
And hypocrite tears, and feigned re-  
luctancy,  
And all the subtle wiles a woman draws  
From the armoury of hate, I did instil  
The poison on his soul. Cunning  
devices,  
False grief, false anger with his son,  
regrets,  
And half confessions—these, with hate-  
ful skill  
Confused together, drove the old man's  
brain  
To frenzy; and I watched him, with a  
sneer,  
Turn to a dotard thirsting for the life  
Of his own child. But how to do the  
deed,  
Yet shed no blood, nor know the  
people's hate,  
Who loved the Prince, I knew not.  
Till one day  
The old man, looking out upon the sea,



Brought the dread Poseidon to avenge  
The treachery of his son. And as we  
stood

Gazing upon the breathless blue, a cloud  
Rose from the deep, a little fleecy cloud,  
Which sudden grew and grew, and  
turned the blue

To purple ; and a keen wind rose and  
sang

Higher and higher, and the wine-dark  
sea

Grew ruffled, and within the circling  
bay

The tiny ripples, stealing up the sand,  
Plunged loud with manes of foam, until  
they swelled

To misty surges thundering on the shore.

Then at the old man's elbow as I  
stood,

A deep dark thought, sent by the powers  
of ill,

Answering, as now I know, my own  
black hate

And not my poor dupe's anger, fired my  
soul

And bade me speak. 'The god has  
heard thy prayer,'

I whispered ; 'See the surge which  
wakes and swells

To fury ; well I know what things shall  
be.

It is Poseidon's voice sounds in the  
storm

And sends thy vengeance. Young Hip-  
polytus

Loves, as thou knowest, on the yellow  
sand,

Hard by the rippled margin of the wave,  
To urge his flying steeds. Bid him go  
forth—

He will obey—and see what recompense  
The god will send his wrong.

In the old man's eyes  
A watery gleam of malice played  
awhile—

I hate him for it—and he bade his son,  
Yoking his three young fiery colts, drive  
forth

His chariot on the sand.

And still the storm  
Blew fiercer and more fierce, and the  
white crests

Plunged on the strand, and the loud  
promontories

Thundered back repercussive, and a  
mist

Of foam, torn landward, hid the sound-  
ing shore.

Then saw I him come forth and bid  
them yoke

His untamed colts. I had not seen his  
face

Since that last day, but, seeing him, I  
felt

The old love spring anew, yet mixed  
with hate—

A storm of warring passions. Tho' I  
knew

What end should come, yet would I  
speak no word

That might avert it. The old man  
looked forth ;

I think he had well-nigh forgotten all  
The wrong he fancied and the doom he  
prayed,

All but the father's pride in the strong  
son,

Who was so young and bold. I saw a  
smile

Upon the dotard's face, when now the  
steeds

Were harnessed and the chariot, on the  
sand

Along the circling margin of the bay,

Flew, swift as light. A sudden gleam  
of sun  
Flashed on the silver harness as it went,  
Burned on the brazen axles of the  
wheels,  
And on the golden fillets of the Prince  
Doubled the gold. Sometimes a larger  
wave  
Would dash in mist around him, and in  
fear  
The rearing coursers plunged, and then  
again  
The strong young arm constrained  
them, and they flashed  
To where the wave-worn foreland ends  
the bay.

And then he turned his chariot, a  
bright speck  
Now seen, now hidden, but always.  
tho' the surge  
Broke round it, safe; emerging like a  
star  
From the white clouds of foam. And  
as I watched,  
Speaking no word, and breathing scarce  
a breath,  
I saw the firm limbs strongly set apart  
Upon the chariot, and the reins held  
high,  
And the proud head bent forward, with  
long locks  
Streaming behind, as nearer and more  
near  
The swift team rushed—until, with a  
half joy,  
It seemed as if my love might yet elude  
The slow sure anger of the god, dull  
wrath  
Swayed by a woman's lie.

But on the verge,  
As I cast my eyes, a vast and purple  
wall

Swelled swiftly towards the land; the  
lesser waves  
Sank as it came, and to its toppling  
crest  
The spume-flecked waters, from the  
strand drawn back,  
Left dry the yellow shore. Onward it  
came,  
Hoarse, capped with breaking foam.  
lurid, immense,  
Rearing its dreadful height. The  
chariot sped  
Nearer and nearer. I could see my love  
With the light of victory in his eyes,  
the smile  
Of daring on his lips: so near he came  
To where the marble palace-wall con-  
fined  
The narrow strip of beach—his brave  
young eyes  
Fixed steadfast on the goal, in the pride  
of life,  
Without a thought of death. I strove  
to cry,  
But terror choked my breath. Then,  
like a bull  
Upon the windy level of the plain  
Lashing himself to rage, the furious  
wave,  
Poising itself a moment, tossing high  
Its bristling crest dashed downward on  
the strand.  
With a stamp, with a rush, with a roar.  
And when I looked,  
The shore, the fields, the plain, were  
one white sea  
Of churning, seething foam—chariot  
and steeds  
Gone, and my darling on the wild mad  
surge  
Tossed high, whirled down, beaten,  
and bruised, and flung,  
Dying upon the marble.

<p>My great love          Sprang up redoubled, and cast out my              hate          And spurned all thought of fear ; and              down the stair          I hurried, and upon the bleeding form          I threw myself, and raised his head,              and clasped          His body to mine, and kissed him on              the lips,          And in his dying ear confessed my              wrong,          And saw the horror in his dying eyes          And knew that I was damned. And              when he breathed          His last pure breath, I rose and slowly              spoke—          Turned to a Fury now by love and              pain—          To the old man who knelt, while all              the throng          Could hear my secret : ‘ See, thou fool,              I am          The murderess of thy son, and thou my              dupe,          Thou and thy gods. See, he was              innocent ;          I murdered him for love. I scorn ye all,          Thee and thy gods together, who are              deceived          By a woman’s lying tongue ! Oh,              doting fool,          To hate thy own ! And ye, false              powers, which punish          The innocent, and let the guilty soul          Escape unscathed, I hate ye all—I              curse,          I loathe you !’          Then I stooped and kissed my love,          And left them in amaze ; and up the              stair          Swept slowly to my chamber, and              therein,</p>	<p>Hating my life and cursing men and              gods,          I did myself to death.              But even here,          I find my punishment. Oh, terrible              doom          Of souls like mine ! To see their evil              done          Always before their eyes, the one dread              scene          Of horror. See, the wild wave on the              verge          Towers horrible, and he—— Oh, Love,              my Love !          Safety is near ! quick ! quicker ! urge              them on !          Thou wilt ’scape it yet !—Nay, nay, it              bursts on him !          I have shed the innocent blood ! Oh,              dreadful gaze          Within his glazing eyes ! Hide them,              ye gods !          Hide them ! I cannot bear them.              Quick ! a dagger !          I will lose their glare in death. Nay,              die I cannot ;          I must endure and live—Death brings              not peace          To the lost souls in Hell.”              And her eyes stared,          Rounded with horror, and she stooped              and gazed          So eagerly, and pressed her fevered hands          Upon her trembling forehead with such              pain          As drives the gazer mad.</p>
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Then as I passed,  
 I marked against the hardly dawning sky  
 A toilsome figure standing, bent and  
 strained,  
 Before a rocky mass, which with great  
 pain  
 And agony of labour it would thrust  
 Up a steep hill. But when upon the crest  
 It poised a moment, then I held my  
 breath  
 With dread, for, lo! the poor feet  
 seemed to clutch  
 The hillside as in fear, and the poor  
 hands  
 With hopeless fingers pressed into the  
 stone  
 In agony, and the limbs stiffened, and  
 a cry  
 Like some strong swimmer's, whom the  
 mightier stream  
 Sweeps downward, and he sees his  
 children's eyes  
 Upon the bank; broke from him; and  
 at last,  
 After long wrestlings with despair, the  
 limbs  
 Relaxed, and as I closed my fearful eyes,  
 Seeing the inevitable doom—a crash,  
 A horrible thunderous noise, as down  
 the steep  
 The shameless fragment leapt. From  
 crag to crag  
 It bounded ever swifter, flashing fire  
 And wreathed with smoke, as to the  
 lowest depths  
 Of the vale it tore, and seemed to take  
 with it  
 The miserable form whose painful gaze  
 I caught, as with the great rock whirled  
 and dashed

Downward, and marking every crag  
 with gore  
 And long gray hairs, it plunged, yet  
 living still,  
 To the black hollow; and then a  
 silence came  
 More dreadful than the noise, and a  
 low groan  
 Was all that I could hear.

When to the foot  
 Of the dark steep I hurried, half in hope  
 To find the victim dead—not recog-  
 nizing  
 The undying life of Hell—I seemed to  
 see  
 An aged man, bruised, bleeding, with  
 gray hairs,  
 And eyes from which the cunning leer  
 of greed  
 Was scarcely yet gone out.

A crafty voice  
 It was that answered me, the voice of  
 guile  
 Part purified by pain:

"There comes not death  
 To those who live in Hell, nor hardly  
 pause  
 Of suffering longer than may serve to  
 make

The pain renewed, more piercing.  
 Long ago,  
 I thought that I had cheated Death,  
 and now

I seek him; but he comes not, nor  
 know I

If ever he will hear me. Whence art  
 thou?

Comest thou from earthly air, or  
 whence? What power  
 Has brought thee hither? For I know  
 indeed

Thou art not lost as I; for never here  
 I look upon a human face, nor see

The ghosts who doubtless here on every  
     side  
 Suffer a common pain, only at times  
 I hear the echo of a shriek far off,  
 Like some faint ghost of woe which  
     fills the pause  
 And interval of suffering; but from  
     whom  
 The voice may come, or whence, I  
     know not, only  
 The air teems with vague pain, which  
     doth distract  
 The ear when for a moment comes  
     surcease  
 Of agony, and the sense of effort spent  
 In vain and fruitless labour, and the pang  
 Of long-deferred defeat, which waits  
     and takes  
 The world-worn heart, and maddens it  
     when all—  
 Heaven, conscience, happiness, are  
     staked and lost  
 For gains which still elude it.  
                     Yet 'twas sweet,  
 A King in early youth, when pleasure  
     is sweet,  
 To live the fair successful years, and  
     know  
 The envy and respect of men. I cared  
 For none of youth's delights: the  
     dance, the song,  
 Allured me not; the smooth soft ways  
     of sense  
 Tempted me not at all. I could despise  
 The follies that I shared not, spending all  
 The long laborious days in toilsome  
     schemes  
 To compass honour and wealth, and,  
     as I grew  
 In name and fame, finding my hoarded  
     gains  
 Transmuted into Power. The seas  
     were white

With laden argosies, and all were mine.  
 The sheltering moles defied the wintry  
     storms,  
 And all were mine. The marble aque-  
     ducts,  
 The costly bridges, all were mine.  
     Fair roads  
 Wound round and round the hills—my  
     work. The gods  
 Alone I heeded not, nor cared at all  
 For aught but that my eyes and ears  
     might take,  
 Spurning invisible things, nor built I to  
     them  
 Temple or shrine, wrapt up in life, set  
     round  
 With earthly blessings like a god. I rose  
 To such excess of weal and fame and  
     pride,  
 My people held me god-like. I grew  
     drunk  
 With too great power, scoffing at men  
     and gods,  
 Careless of both, but not averse to fling  
 To those too weak themselves, what  
     benefits  
 My larger wisdom spurned.  
                     Then suddenly  
 I knew the pain of failure. Summer  
     storms  
 Sucked down my fleets even within  
     sight of port.  
 A grievous blight wasted the harvest-  
     fields,  
 Mocking my hopes of gain. Wars  
     came and drained  
 My store, and I grew needy, knowing now  
 The hell of stronger souls, the loss of  
     power  
 Wherein they exulted once. There  
     comes no pain  
 Deeper than to have known delight of  
     power,

And then to lose it all. But I, I would  
 not  
 Sit tame beneath defeat, trimming my  
 sails  
 To wait the breeze of Fortune—fickle  
 breath  
 Which perhaps might breathe no more  
 —but chose instead  
 By rash conceit and bolder enterprise  
 To win her aid again. I had no thought  
 Of selfish gain, only to be and act  
 As a god to those, feeding my sum of  
 pride  
 With acted good.

But evermore defeat  
 Dogged me, and more and more my  
 people grew  
 To doubt me, seeing not the wealth,  
 the force,  
 Which once they worshipped. Then  
 the lust of power  
 Loved, not for sake of others, but itself,  
 Grew on me, and the pride which can  
 dare all,  
 Save failure only, seized me. Evil  
 finds  
 Its ready chance. There were rich  
 argosies  
 Upon the seas: I sank them, ship and  
 crew,  
 In the unbetraying ocean. Wayfarers  
 Crossing the passes with rich mer-  
 chandise  
 My creatures, hid behind the crags,  
 o'erwhelmed  
 With rocks hurled downward. Yet I  
 spent my gains  
 For the public weal, not otherwise;  
 and they,  
 The careless people, took the piteous  
 spoils  
 Which cost the lives of many, and a  
 man's soul,

And blessed the giver. Empty venal  
 blessings,  
 Which sting more deep than curses!  
 For awhile  
 I was content with this, but at the last  
 A great contempt and hatred of them  
 took me,  
 The base, vile churls! Why should  
 I stain my soul  
 For such as those—dogs that would  
 fawn and lick  
 The hand that fed them, but, if food  
 should fail,  
 Would turn and rend me? I would  
 none of them;  
 I would grow rich and happy, being  
 indeed  
 Godlike in brain to such. So with all  
 craft,  
 And guile, and violence I enriched me,  
 loading  
 My treasures with gold. My deep-laid  
 schemes  
 Of gain engrossed the long laborious  
 days,  
 Stretched far into the night. Enjoy,  
 I might not,  
 Seeing it was all to do, and life so brief  
 That ere a man might gain the goal he  
 would,  
 Lo! Age, and with it Death, and so  
 an end!  
 For all the tales of the indignant gods,  
 What were they but the priests'? I  
 had myself  
 Broken all oaths; long time deceived  
 and ruined  
 With every phase of fraud the pious  
 fools  
 Whom oath-sworn Justice bound;  
 battered on blood;  
 And what was I the worse? How  
 should the gods

Bear rule if I were happy? Death alone  
Was certain. Therefore must I haste  
to heap  
Treasure sufficient for my need, and  
then  
Enjoy the gathered good.

But gradually  
There came—not great disasters which  
might crush  
All hope, but petty checks which did  
decrease  
My store, and left my labour vain, and  
me  
Unwilling to enjoy ; and gradually  
I felt the chill approach of age, which  
stole  
Higher and higher on me, till the life,  
As in a paralytic, left my limbs  
And heart, and mounted upwards to  
my brain,  
Its last resort, and rested there awhile  
Ere it should spread its wings. But  
even thus,  
Tho' powerless to enjoy, the insatiate  
greed  
And thirst of power sustained me, and  
supplied  
Life's spark with some scant fuel, till  
it seemed,  
Year after year, as if I could not die,  
Holding so fast to life. I grew so old  
That all the comrades of my youth,  
my prime,  
My age, were gone, and I was left alone  
With those who knew me not, bereft  
of all  
Except my master passion—an old man  
Forlorn, forgotten of the gods and  
Death.

Yet all the people, seeing me grow old  
And prosperous, held me wise, and  
spread abroad

Strange fables, growing day by day  
more strange—

How I deceived the very gods. They  
thought

That I was blest, remembering not the  
wear

Of anxious thought, the growing sum  
of pain,

The failing ear and eye, the slower  
limbs,

Whose briefer name is Age : and yet I  
trow

I was not all unhappy, though I knew  
It was too late to enjoy, and though  
my store

Increased not as my greed—nay, even  
sunk down

A little, year by year. Till, last of  
all,

When now my time was come and I  
had grown

A little tired of living, a trivial hurt  
Laid me upon my bed ; and as I mused

On my long life and all its villanies,  
The wickedness I did, the blood I shed,

The guile, the frauds of years—they  
came with news,

One now, and now another ; how my  
schemes

Were crushed, my enterprises lost, my  
toil

And labour all in vain. Day after day  
They brought these tidings, while I

longed to rise

And stay the tide of ill, and raved to  
know

I could not. At the last the added sum  
Of evil, like yon great rock poised  
awhile

Uncertain, gathered into one, o'er-  
whelmed

My feeble strength, and left me ruined  
and lost,

And showed me all I was, and all the depth	The spring of act, whereby in earth and heaven
And folly of my sin, and racked my brain,	Both men and gods do breathe and live and are,
And sank me in despair and misery, And broke my heart and slew me.	Since Life is Act and not to Do is Death---
Therefore 'tis	I do not blame thee : but to work in vain
I spend the long, long centuries which have come	Is bitterest penalty : to find at last
Between me and my sin, in such dread tasks	The soul all fouled with sin and stained with blood
As that thou sawest. In the soul I sinned :	In vain ; ah, this is hell indeed—the hell
In body and soul I suffer. What I bade My minions do to others, that of woe I bear myself ; and in the pause of ill, As now, I know again the bitter pang Of failure, which of old pierced thro' my soul	(Of lost and striving souls !" Then as I passed,
And left me to despair. The pain of mind	The halting figure bent itself again To the old task, and up the rugged steep
Is fiercer far than any bodily ill, And both are mine—the pang of tor- ture-pain	Thrust the great rock with groanings. Honor chained
Always recurring ; and, far worse, the pang	My parting footsteps, like a nightmare dream
Of consciousness of black sins sinned in vain—	Which holds us that we flee not, with fixed eyes
The doom of constant failure.	That loathe to see, yet cannot choose but gaze
Will, fierce Will !	Till all be done. Slowly, with dread- ful toil
Thou parent of unrest and toil and woe,	And struggle and strain, and bleeding hands and knees,
Measureless effort ! growing day by day To force strong souls along the giddy steep	And more than mortal strength, against the hill
That slopes to the pit of Hell, where effort serves	He pressed, the wretched one ! till with long pain
Only to speed destruction ! Yet I know Thou art not, as some hold, the primal curse	He trembled on the summit, a gaunt form,
Which doth condemn us ; since thou bearest in thee	With that great rock above him, poised and strained,
No power to satisfy thyself ; but rather,	Now gaining, now receding, now in act To win the summit, now borne down again,
	And then the inevitable crash—the



Leaping from crag to crag. But ere it  
 ceased  
 In dreadful silence, and the low groan  
 came,  
 My limbs were loosed with one con-  
 vulsive bound ;  
 I hid my face within my hands, and fled,  
 Surfeit with horror.

Then it was again  
 A woman whom I saw, pitiless, stern,  
 Bearing the brand of blood—a lithe  
 dark form,  
 And cruel eyes which burned beneath  
 the gems  
 That argued her a Queen, and on her  
 side  
 An ancient stain of gore, which did  
 befoul  
 Her royal robe. A murderess in thought  
 And dreadful act, who took within the  
 toils  
 Her kingly Lord, and slew him of old  
 time  
 After burnt Troy. I had no time to  
 speak  
 When she shrieked thus :

“ It doth repent me not.  
 I would 'twere yet to do, and I would  
 do it  
 Again a thousand times, if the shed  
 blood  
 Might for one hour restore me to the  
 kisses  
 Of my Ægisthus. Oh, he was divine,  
 My hero, with the godlike locks and  
 eyes  
 Of Eros' self ! What boots it that they  
 prate  
 Of wisely duty, love of spouse or child,

Honour or pity, when the swift fire takes  
 A woman's heart, and burns it out, and  
 leaps  
 With fierce forked tongue around it,  
 till it lies  
 In ashes, a dead heart, nor aught re-  
 mains  
 Of old affections, naught but the new  
 flame  
 Which is unquenched desire ?

It did not come,  
 My blessing, all at once, but the slow  
 fruit  
 Of solitude and midnight loneliness,  
 And weary waiting for the tardy news  
 Of taken Troy. Long years I sate alone,  
 Widowed, within my palace, while my  
 Lord  
 Was over seas, waging the accursed war,  
 First of the file of Kings. Year after  
 year  
 Came false report, or harder, no report  
 Of the great fleet. The summers waxed  
 and waned,  
 The wintry surges smote the sounding  
 shores,  
 And yet there came no end of it. They  
 brought  
 Now hopeless failure, now great vic-  
 tories ;  
 And all alike were false, all but delay  
 And hope deferred, which coming not,  
 can break  
 The strong heart suffering wrings not.

So I bore  
 Long time the solitary years, and sought  
 To solace the dull days with motherly  
 cares  
 For those my Lord had left me. My  
 firstborn,  
 Iphigeneia, sailed at first with him  
 Upon that fatal voyage, but the young  
 Orestes and Electra stayed with me—

Not dear as she was, for the firstborn  
 takes  
 The mother's heart, and, with the milk  
 it draws  
 From the mother's virgin breast, drains  
 all the love  
 It bore, ay, even tho' the sire be dear ;  
 Much more, then, when he is a King  
 indeed,  
 Mighty in war and council, but too high  
 To stoop to a woman's love. But she  
 was gone,  
 Nor heard I tidings of her, knowing not  
 If yet she walked the earth, nor if she  
 bare  
 The load of children, even as I had  
 borne  
 Her in my opening girlhood, when I  
 leapt  
 From child to Queen, but never loved  
 the King.

Thus the slow years rolled onward,  
 till at last  
 There came a dreadful rumour—'She  
 is dead,  
 Thy daughter, years ago. The cruel  
 priests  
 Clamoured for blood ; the stern cold  
 Kings stood round  
 Without a tear, and he, her sire, with  
 them,  
 To see a virgin bleed. They cut with  
 knives  
 [The slender girlish throat; they watched  
 the blood  
 Drip slowly on the sand, and the young  
 life  
 Meek as a lamb come to the sacrifice  
 To appease the angry gods.' And he,  
 the King,  
 Her father, stood by too, and saw them  
 work

The wickedness, breathing no word of  
 wrath,  
 Till all was done ! The cowards ! the  
 dull cowards !  
 I would some black storm, bursting  
 suddenly,  
 Had whelmed them and their fleets, ere  
 yet they dared  
 To waste an innocent life !  
 I had gone mad,  
 I know it, but for him, my love, my  
 dear,  
 My fair sweet love. He came to com-  
 fort me  
 With words of friendship, holding that  
 my Lord  
 Was bound, perhaps, to let her die—  
 'The gods  
 Were oftentimes hard to appease—or was  
 it indeed  
 The priests who asked it? Were there  
 any gods?  
 Or only phantoms, creatures of the brain,  
 Born of the fears of men, the greed of  
 priests,  
 Useful to govern women? Had he  
 been  
 Lord of the fleet, not all the sooth-  
 sayers  
 Who ever frightened cowards should have  
 sunk  
 His soul to such black depths.' I  
 hearkening to him  
 As 'twere my own thought grown  
 articulate,  
 Found my grief turn to hate, and hate  
 to love—  
 Hate of my Lord, love of the voice  
 which spoke  
 Such dear and comfortable words. And  
 thus,  
 Love to a storm of passion growing,  
 swept

My wounded soul and dried my tears,  
 as dries  
 The hot sirocco all the bitter pools  
 Of salt among the sand. I never  
 knew  
 True love before ; I was a child, no  
 more,  
 When the King cast his eyes on me.  
 What is it  
 To have borne the weight of offspring  
 'neath the zone  
 If Love be not their sire ; or live long  
 years  
 Of commerce, not of love ? Better a  
 day  
 Of Passion than the long unlovely years  
 Of wisely duty, when Love cometh not  
 To wake the barren days !

And yet at first  
 I hesitated long, nor would embrace  
 The blessing that was mine. We are  
 hedged round,  
 We women, by such close-drawn ordi-  
 nances,  
 Set round us by our tyrants, that we  
 fear  
 To overstep a hand's breadth the dull  
 bounds  
 Of custom ; but at last Love, waking  
 in me,  
 Burst all my chains asunder, and I  
 lived  
 For naught but Love.

My son, the young Orestes,  
 I sent far off ; my girl Electra only  
 Miggins, too young to doubt me, and  
 I knew  
 Of my what 'twas to live.  
 My hero. So the swift years  
 eyes found me happy, till the  
 Of Eros' ~~at~~  
 pri day when Rumour, thou-  
 Of wise-tongued,

Whispered of taken Troy ; and from  
 my dream  
 Of happiness, sudden I woke, and knew  
 The coming retribution. We had  
 grown  
 Too loving for concealment, and our  
 tale  
 Of mutual love was bruited far and  
 wide  
 Through Argos. All the gossips bruited  
 it,  
 And were all tongue to tell it to the  
 King  
 When he should come. And should  
 the cold proud Lord  
 I never loved, the murderer of my girl,  
 Come 'twixt my love and me ? A  
 swift resolve  
 Flashed through me pondering on it :  
 Love for Love  
 And Blood for Blood—the simple  
 golden rule  
 Taught by the elder gods.  
 When I had taken  
 My fixed resolve, I grew impatient for  
 it,  
 Counting the laggard days. Oh, it was  
 sweet  
 To simulate the yearning of a wife  
 Long parted from her Lord, and mock  
 the fools  
 Who dogged each look and word, and  
 but for fear  
 Had torn me from my throne—the  
 pies, the jays,  
 The impotent chatterers, who thought  
 by words  
 To stay me in the act ! 'Twas sweet  
 to mock them  
 And read distrust within their eyes,  
 when I,  
 Knowing my purpose, bade them quick  
 prepare

All fitting honours for the King, and  
knew

They dared not disobey—oh, 'twas  
enough

To wing the slow-paced hours.

But when at last  
I saw his sails upon the verge, and then  
The sea worn ship, and marked his  
face grown old,

The body a little bent, which was so  
straight,

The thin gray hairs which were the  
raven locks

Of manhood when he went, I felt a  
moment

I could not do the deed. But when I  
saw

The beautiful sad woman come with  
him,

The future in her eyes, and her pale  
lips

Silent, but charged with doom, two  
thoughts at once

Assailed me, bidding me despatch with  
a blow

Him and his mistress, making sure the  
will

Of fate, and my revenge.

Oh, it was strange  
To see all happen as we planned ; as  
'twere

Some drama oft rehearsed, wherein  
each step,

Each word, is so prepared, the poorest  
player

Knows his turn come to do—the solemn  
landing—

The ride to the palace gate—the cour-  
tesies

Of welcome—the mute crowds without  
—the bath

Prepared within—the precious circling  
folds

Of tissue stretched around him, shutting  
out

The gaze, and folding helpless like a  
net

The mighty limbs—the battle-axe laid  
down

Against the wall, and I, his wife and  
Queen,

Alone with him, waiting and watching  
still,

Till the woman shrieked without.  
Then with swift step

I seized the axe, and struck him as he  
lay

Helpless, once, twice, and thrice—once  
for my girl,

Once for my love, once for the woman,  
and all

For Fate and my Revenge !

He gave a groan,  
Once only, as I thought he might ; and  
then

No sound but the quick gurgling of the  
blood,

As it flowed from him in streams, and  
turned the pure

And limpid water of the bath to red—  
I had not looked for that—it flowed  
and flowed,

And seemed to madden me to look on  
it,

Until my love with hands bloody as  
mine,

But with the woman's blood, rushed in,  
and eyes

Rounded with horror ; and we turned  
to go,

And left the dead alone.

But happiness  
Still mocked me, and a doubt un-  
known before

Came on me, and amid the silken  
shows

And luxury of power I seemed to see	Who now should be a man; and yearned sometimes
Another answer to my riddle of life Than that I gave myself, and it was 'murder;'	To see his face, yet feared lest from his eyes
And in my people's sullen mien and eyes,	His father's-soul should smite me.
'Murder;' and in the mirror, when I looked,	So I lived
'Murder' glared out, and terror lest my son	Happy and yet unquiet—a stern voice Speaking of doom, which long time softer notes
Returning, grown to manhood, should avenge	Of careless weal, the music that doth spring
His father's blood. For somehow, as 'twould seem,	From the fair harmonies of life and love,
The gods, if gods there be, or the stern Fate	Would drown in their own concord. This at times,
Which doth direct our little lives, do filch	Nay, day by day, stronger and dread- fuller,
Our happiness—though bright with Love's own ray,	With dominant accent, marred the sounds of joy
There comes a cloud which veils it. Yet, indeed,	By one prevailing discord. So at length
My days were happy. I repent me not;	I came to lose the Present in the dread
I would wade through seas of blood to know again	Of what might come; the penalty that waits
Those keen delights once more.	Upon successful sin; who, having sinned,
But my young girl	Had missed my sin's reward.
Electra, grown to woman, turned from me	Until one day
Her modest maiden eyes, nor loved to set	I, looking from my palace casement, saw
Her kiss upon my cheek, but, all dis- traught	A humble suppliant, clad in pilgrim garb,
With secret care, hid her from all the pomps	Approach the marble stair. A sudden throb
And revelries which did befit her youth, Walking alone; and often at the tomb	Thrilled thro' me, and the mother's heart went forth
Of her lost sire they found her, pouring out	Thro' all disguise of garb and rank and years,
Libations to the dead. And evermore	Knowing my son. How fair he was, how tall
I did bethink me of my son Orestes,	And vigorous, my boy! What strong straight limbs

And noble port ! How beautiful the shade	Which are the offspring of a common sire,
Of manhood on his lip ! I longed to burst	Strove for the mastery, till within his eyes
From my chamber down, yearning to throw myself	I saw his father's ghost glare unappeased From out Love's casements.
Upon his neck within the palace court, Before the guards — spurning my queenly rank,	Then I knew my fate And his—mine to be slain by my son's hand,
All but my motherhood. And then a chill	And his to slay me, 'since the Furies drive
Of doubt o'erspread me, knowing what a gulf	Our lives to one destruction ; and I took
Fate set between our lives. impass- able	His point within my breast.
As that great gulf which yawns 'twixt life and death	But I praise not The selfish, careless gods who wrecked our lives,
And 'twixt this Hell and Heaven. I shrank back,	Making the King the murderer of his girl,
And turned to think a moment, half in fear,	And me his murderess ; making my son
And half in pain ; dividing the swift mind,	The murderer of his mother and her love—
Yet all in love.	A mystery of blood !—I curse them all,
Then came a cry, a groan, From the inner court, the clash of swords, the fall	The careless Forces, sitting far with- drawn
Of a corpse upon the pavement : and one cried,	Upon the heights of Space, taking men's lives
' The King is dead, slain by the young Orestes,	For playthings, and deriding as in sport
Who cometh hither.' With the word, the door	Our happiness and woe--I curse them all.
Flew open, and my son stood straight before me,	We have a right to joy ; we have a right,
His drawn sword dripping blood. Oh, he was fair	I say, as they have. Let them stand confessed
And terrible to see, when from his limbs,	The puppets that they are—too weak to give
The suppliant's mantle fallen, left the mail	The good they feign to love, since Fate, too strong
And arms of a young warrior. Love and Hate,	For them as us, beyond their painted sky,

Sits and derides them, all I curse  
 Fate too,  
 The deaf blind Fury, taking human  
 souls  
 And crushing them, as a dull fretful  
 child  
 Crushes its toys and knows not with  
 what skill  
 Those feeble forms are feigned.  
 I curse, I loathe,  
 I spit on them. It doth repent me  
 not.  
 I would 'twere yet to do. I have lived  
 my life.  
 I have loved. See, there he lies within  
 the bath,  
 And thus I smite him! thus! Didst  
 hear him groan?  
 Oh, vengeance, thou art sweet! What,  
 living still?  
 Ah me! we cannot die! Come, torture  
 me,  
 Ye Furies—for I love not soothing  
 words—  
 As once ye did my son. Ye miserable  
 Blind ministers of Hell, I do defy  
 you;  
 Not all your torments can undo the  
 Past  
 Of Passion and of Love!"

Even as she spake  
 There came a viewless trouble in the  
 air,  
 Which took her, and a sweep of wings  
 unseen,  
 And terrible sounds, which swooped  
 on her and hushed  
 Her voice, and seemed to occupy her  
 soul  
 With horror and despair; and as she  
 passed  
 I marked her agonized eyes.

But as I went,  
 Full many a dreadful shape of lonely  
 pain  
 I saw. What need to tell them? We  
 are filled  
 Who live to-day with a more present  
 sense  
 Of the great love of God, than those of  
 old  
 Who, groping in the dawn of Know-  
 ledge, saw  
 Only dark shadows of the Unknown;  
 or he,  
 First born of later singers, who swept  
 deep  
 His awful lyre, and woke the voice of  
 song,  
 Dumb thro' the age-long night. We  
 dread to-day  
 To dwell on those long agonies its sin  
 Brings on the offending soul; who  
 hold a creed  
 Of deeper Pity, knowing what chains  
 of ill  
 Confine our petty lives. Each phase  
 of woe,  
 Suffering, and torture which the gloomy  
 thought  
 Of bigots feigns for others—all were  
 there.  
 One there was stretched upon a rolling  
 wheel,  
 Which was the barren round of sense,  
 that still  
 Returned upon itself and broke the  
 limbs  
 Bound to it day and night. Others I  
 saw  
 Doomed, with unceasing toil, to fill the  
 urns

Whose precious waters sank ere they could slake	Of Time and Suffering has effaced the stain
Their burning thirst. Another shapeless soul,	Ingrown upon the soul, and the cleansed spirit,
Full of revolts and hates and tyrannous force,	Long ages floating on the wandering winds
The weight of earth, which was its earth-born taint,	Or rolling deeps of Space, renews itself And doth regain its dwelling, and, once more
Pressed groaning down, while with fierce beak and claw,	Blent with the general order, floats anew Upon the stream of Things,* and comes at length,
The vulture of remorse, piercing his breast,	After new deaths, to that dim waiting- place
Preyed on his heart. For others, over- head,	Thou next shalt see, and with the justified
Great crags of rock impending seemed to fall,	White souls awaits the End; or, snatched at once,
But fell not nor brought peace. I felt my soul	If Fate so will, to the pure sphere itself,
Blunted with horrors, yearning to escape To where, upon the limits of the wood, Some scanty twilight grew.	Lives and is blest, and works the Eternal Work
But ere I passed	Whose name and end is Love ! There is an end
From those grim shades a deep voice sounded near,	Of Wrong and Death and Hell !"
A voice without a form.	Even as I heard,
"There is an end	I passed from out the shadow of Death and Pain,
Of all things that thou seest ! There is an end	Crying, "There is an end !"
Of Wrong and Death and Hell, when the long wear	

## BOOK II.

## HADES.

THEN from those dark	There stirred no breath of air to wake to life
And dreadful precincts passing, ghostly fields	The slumbers of the world. The sky above
And voiceless took me. A faint twilight veiled	Was one gray, changeless cloud ; there looked no eye
The leafless, shadowy trees and herb- less plains.	Of Life from the veiled heavens ; but Sleep and Death

\* Virgil, "Æneid" vi. 740.



Compassed me everywhere. And yet  
no fear

Nor horror took me here, where was  
no pain

Nor dread, save that strange tremor  
which assails

One who in life's hot noontide looks on  
death

And knows he too shall die. The  
ghosts which rose

From every darkling copse showed  
thin and pale—

Thinner and paler far than those I left  
In agony; even as Pity seems to wear  
A thinner form than Fear.

Not caged alone  
Like those the avenging Furies purged  
were these,

Nor that dim land as those black  
cavernous depths

Where no hope comes. Fair souls  
were they and white

Whom there I saw, waiting as we shall  
wait,

The Beatific End, but thin and pale  
As the young faith which made them,  
touched a little

By the sad memories of the earth,  
made glad

A little by past joys: no more; and  
wrapt

In musing on the brief play played by  
them

Upon the lively earth, yet ignorant  
Of the long lapse of years, and what  
had been

Since they too breathed Life's air, or if  
they knew

Keeping some echo only; but their  
pain

Was fainter than their joy, and a great  
hope

Like ours possessed them dimly.

First I saw

A youth who pensive leaned against  
the trunk

Of a dark cypress, and an idle flute  
Hung at his side. A sorrowful sad  
soul,

Such as sometimes he knows, who  
meets the gaze,

Mute, uncomplaining yet most pitiful,  
Of one whom Nature, by some secret  
spite,

Has maimed and left imperfect; or the  
pain

Which fills a poet's eyes. Beneath his  
robe

I seemed to see the scar of cruel stripes,  
Too hastily concealed. Yet was he  
not

Wholly unhappy, but from out the  
core

Of suffering flowed a secret spring of  
joy,

Which mocked the droughts of Fate,  
and left him glad

And glorying in his sorrow. As I  
gazed

He raised his silent flute, and, half  
ashamed,

Blew a soft note; and as I stayed  
awhile

I heard him thus discourse—

“The flute is sweet  
To gods and men, but sweeter far the  
lyre

And voice of a true singer. Shall I  
fear

To tell of that great trial, when I  
strove

And Phoebus conquered? Nay, no  
shame it is

To bow to an immortal melody ;  
But glory.

Once among the Phrygian hills  
I lay a-musing,—while the silly sheep  
Wandered among the thyme—upon the  
bank

Of a clear mountain stream; beneath  
the pines,

Safe hidden from the noon. A dreamy  
haze

Played on the uplands, but the hills  
were clear

In sunlight, and no cloud was on the  
sky.

It was the time when a deep silence  
comes

Upon the summer earth, and all the  
birds

Have ceased from singing, and the  
world is still

As midnight, and if any live thing  
move—

Some fur-clad creature, or cool gliding  
snake—

Within the pipy overgrowth of weeds,  
The ear can catch the rustle, and the  
trees

And earth and air are listening. As I  
lay,

Faintly, as in a dream, I seemed to  
hear

A tender music, like the Æolian  
chords,

Sound low within the woodland, whence  
the stream,

Flowed full, yet silent. Long, with  
ear to ground,

I hearkened; and the sweet strain,  
fuller grown,

Rounder and clearer came, and danced  
along

In mirthful measure now, and now  
grown grave

In dying falls, and sweeter and more  
clear,

Tripping at nuptials and high revelry,  
Wailing at burials, rapt in soaring  
thoughts,

Chanting strange sea-tales full of  
mystery,

Touching all chords of being, life and  
death,

Now rose, now sank, and always was  
divine,

So strange the music came.

Till, as I lay  
Enraptured, shrill a sudden discord  
rang,

Then all the sounds were still. A light-  
ning-flash,

As from a sun-kissed gem, revealed the  
wood.

A noise of water smitten, and on the  
heights

A fair white fleece of cloud, which  
swiftly climbed

Into the furthest heaven. Then, as I  
mused,

Knowing a parting goddess, straight I  
saw

A wayward splendour float upon the  
stream,

And knew it for this jewelled flute,  
which paused

Before me on an eddy. It I snatched  
Eager, and to my ardent lips I bore

The wonder, and behold, with the first  
breath—

The first warm human breath, the silent  
strains,

The half-drowned notes which late the  
goddess blew,

Revived, and sounded clearer, sweeter  
far

Than mortal skill could make. So with  
delight

I left my flocks to wander o'er the  
     wastes  
 Untended, and the wolves and eagles  
     seized  
 The tender lambs, but I was for my  
     art—  
 Nought else; and though the high-  
     pitched notes divine  
 Grew faint, yet something lingered, and  
     at last  
 So sweet a note I sounded of my skill,  
 That all the Phrygian highlands, all  
     the far  
 Hill villages, were fain to hear the  
     strain,  
 Which the mad shepherd made.  
                                 So, overbold,  
 And rapt in my new art, at last I dared  
 To challenge Phœbus' self.  
                                 'Twas a fair day  
 When sudden, on the mountain side, I  
     saw  
 A train of fleecy clouds in a white  
     band  
 Descending. Down the gleaming  
     pinnacles  
 And difficult crags they floated, and the  
     arch,  
 Drawn with its thousand rays against  
     the sun,  
 Hung like a glory o'er them. Midst  
     the pines  
 They clothed themselves with form, and  
     straight I knew  
 The immortals. Young Apollo, with  
     his lyre,  
 Kissed by the sun, and all the Muses  
     clad  
 In robes of gleaming white; then a  
     great fear,  
 Yet mixed with joy, assailed me, for I  
     knew  
 Myself a mortal equalled with the gods.

Ah me! how fair they were! how  
     fair and dread  
 In face and form, they showed, when  
     now they stayed  
 Upon the thymy slope, and the young  
     god  
 Lay with his choir around him, beautiful  
 And bold as Youth and Dawn! There  
     was no cloud  
 Upon the sky, nor any sound at all  
 When I began my strain. No coward  
     fear  
 Of what might come restrained me;  
     but an awe  
 Of those immortal eyes and ears divine  
 Looking and listening. All the earth  
     seemed full  
 Of ears for me alone—the woods, the  
     fields,  
 The hills, the skies were listening.  
     Scarce a sound  
 My flute might make; such subtle  
     harmonies  
 The silence seemed to weave round me  
     and flout  
 The half unuttered thought. Till last  
     I blew,  
 As now, a hesitating note, and lo!  
 The breath divine, lingering on mortal  
     lips,  
 Hurried my soul along to such fair  
     rhymes,  
 Sweeter than wont, that swift I knew  
     my life  
 Rise up within me, and expand, and  
     all  
 The human, which so nearly is divine,  
 Was glorified, and on the Muses'  
     lips,  
 And in their lovely eyes, I saw a  
     fair  
 Approval, and my soul in me was  
     glad.

<p>For all the strains I blew were strains of love— Love striving, love triumphant, love that lies Within belovèd arms, and wreathes his locks With flowers, and lets the world go by and sings Unheeding; and I saw a kindly gleam Within the Muses' eyes, who were indeed, Women, though god-like.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">But upon the face</p> <p>Of the young Sun-god only haughty scorn Sate, and he swiftly struck his golden lyre, And played the Song of Life; and lo, I knew My strain, how earthy! Oh, to hear the young Apollo playing! and the hidden cells And chambers of the universe displayed Before the charmed sound! I seemed to float In some enchanted cave, where the wave dips In from the sunlit sea, and floods its depths With reflex hues of heaven. My soul was rapt By that I heard, and dared to wish no more For victory; and yet because the sound Of music that is born of human breath Comes straighter from the soul than any strain The hand alone can make; therefore I knew, With a mixed thrill of pity and delight, The nine immortal Sisters hardly touched By that fine strain of music, as by mine,</p>	<p>And when the high lay trembled to its close, Still doubting. Then upon the Sun-god's face There passed a cold proud smile. He swept his lyre Once more, then laid it down, and with clear voice, The voice of godhead, sang. Oh, ecstasy, Oh happiness of him who once has heard Apollo singing! For his ears the sound Of grosser music dies, and all the earth Is full of subtle undertones, which change The listener and transform him. As he sang— Of what I know not, but the music touched Each chord of being—I felt my secret life Stand open to it, as the parched earth yawns To drink the summer rain; and at the call Of those refreshing waters, all my thought Stir from its dark and sunless depths, and burst Into sweet, odorous flowers, and from their wells Deep call to deep, and all the mystery Of all that is, laid open. As he sang, I saw the Nine, with lovely pitying eyes, Sign 'He has conquered.' Yet I felt no pang Of fear, only deep joy that I had heard Such music while I lived, even though it brought Torture and death. For what were it to lie</p>
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Sleek, crowned with roses, drinking  
vulgar praise,  
And surfeited with offerings, the dull  
gift  
Of ignorant hands—all which I might  
have known—  
To this diviner failure? Godlike 'tis  
To climb upon the icy ledge, and fall  
Where other footsteps dare not. So I  
knew  
My fate, and it was near.

For to a pine  
They bound me willing, and with cruel  
stripes  
Tore me, and took my life.

But from my blood  
Was born the stream of song, and on  
its flow  
My poor flute, to the clear swift river  
borne,  
Floated, and thence adown a lordlier  
tide  
Into the deep, wide sea. I do not  
blame  
Phœbus, or Nature which has set this  
bar  
Betwixt success and failure, for I know  
How far high failure overleaps the  
bound  
Of low successes. Only suffering draws  
The inner heart of song and can elicit  
The perfumes of the soul. 'Twere not  
enough  
To fail, for that were happiness to  
him  
Who ever upward looks with reverent  
eye  
And seeks but to admire. So, since  
the race  
Of bards soars highest; as who seek to  
show  
Our lives as in a glass; therefore it  
comes

That suffering weds with song, from  
him of old,  
Who solaced his blank darkness with  
his lyre;  
Through all the story of neglect and  
scorn,  
Necessity, sheer hunger, early death,  
Which smite the singer still. Not only  
those  
Who keep clear accents of the voice  
divine  
Are honourable—they are happy, in-  
deed,  
Whate'er the world has held—but those  
who hear  
Some fair faint echoes, though the  
crowd be deaf,  
And see the white gods' garments on  
the hills,  
Which the crowd sees not, though they  
may not find  
Fit music for their thought; they too  
are blest,  
Not pitiable. Not from arrogant  
pride  
Nor over-boldness fail they who have  
striven  
To tell what they have heard, with  
voice too weak  
For such high message. More it is  
than ease,  
Palace and pomp, honours and luxuries,  
To have seen white Presences upon the  
hills,  
To have heard the voices of the Eternal  
Gods."

So spake he, and I seemed to look on  
him,  
Whose sad young eyes grow on us from  
the page  
Of his own verse: who did himself to  
death:

Or whom the dullard slew : or whom  
     the sea  
 Rapt from us : and I passed without a  
     word,  
 Slow, grave, with many musings.

                                    Then I came  
 On one a maiden, meek with folded  
     hands,  
 Seated against a rugged face of cliff,  
 In silent thought. Anon she raised her  
     arms,  
 Her gleaming arms, above her on the  
     rock,  
 With hands which clasped each other,  
     till she showed  
 As in a statue, and her white robe fell  
 Down from her maiden shoulders, and  
     I knew  
 The fair form as it seemed chained to  
     the stone  
 By some invisible gyves, and named  
     her name :  
 And then she raised her frightened eyes  
     to mine  
 As one who, long expecting some great  
     fear,  
 Scarce sees deliverance come. But  
     when she saw  
 Only a kindly glance, a softer look  
 Came in them, and she answered to my  
     thought  
 With a sweet voice and low.

                                    "I did but muse  
 Upon the painful past, long dead and  
     done,  
 Forgetting I was saved.

                                    The angry clouds  
 Burst always on the low flat plains, and  
     swept

The harvest to the ocean ; all the land  
 Was wasted. A great serpent from the  
     deep,  
 Lifting his horrible head above their  
     homes,  
 Devoured the children. And the people  
     prayed  
 In vain to careless gods.

                                    On that dear land,  
 Which now was turned into a sullen  
     sea,  
 Gazing in safety from the stately towers  
 Of my sire's palace, I, a princess, saw,  
 Lapt in soft luxury, within my bower  
 The wreck of humble homes come  
     whirling by,  
 The drowning, bleating flocks, the  
     bellowing herds,  
 The grain scarce husbanded by toiling  
     hands  
 Upon the sunlit plain, rush to the sea,  
 With floating corpses. On the rain-  
     swept hills  
 The remnant of the people huddled  
     close,  
 Homeless and starving. All my being  
     was filled  
 With pity for them, and I joyed to  
     give  
 What food and shelter and compas-  
     sionate hands  
 Of woman might. I took the little  
     ones  
 And clasped them shivering to the  
     virgin breast  
 Which knew no other touch but theirs,  
     and gave  
 Raiment and food. My sire, not stern  
     to me,  
 Smiled on me as he saw. My gentle  
     mother,  
 Who loved me with a closer love than  
     binds

A mother to her son ; and sunned her-  
     self  
 In my fresh beauty, seeing in my young  
     gaze  
 Her own fair vanished youth ; doted on  
     me,  
 And fain had kept my eyes from the  
     sad sights  
 That pained them. But my heart was  
     faint in me,  
 Seeing the ineffable miseries of life,  
 And that mysterious anger of the gods,  
 And helpless to allay them. All in  
     vain  
 Were prayer and supplication, all in  
  
 The costly victims steamed. The  
     vengeful clouds  
 Hid the fierce sky, and still the ruin  
     came.  
 And wallowing his grim length within  
     the flood,  
 Over the ravaged fields and homeless  
     homes,  
 The fell sea-monster raged, sating his  
     jaws  
 With blood and rapine.  
         Then to the dread shrine  
 Of Ammon went the priests, and  
     reverend chiefs  
 Of all the nation. White-robed, at  
     their head,  
 Went slow my royal sire. The oracle  
 Spoke clear, not as oft-times in words  
     obscure,  
 Ambiguous. And as we stood to meet  
 The suppliants—she who bare me, with  
     her head  
 Upon my neck—we cheerful and with  
     song  
 Welcomed their swift return ; auguring  
     well  
 From such a quick-spiced mission.

                                But my sire  
 Hid his face from me, and the crowd of  
     priests  
 And nobles looked not at us. And no  
     word  
 Was spoken till at last one drew a  
     scroll  
 And gave it to the queen, who straight-  
     way swooned,  
 Having read it, on my breast, and then  
     I saw,  
 I the young girl whose soft life scarcely  
     knew  
 Shadow of sorrow, I whose heart was  
     full  
 Of pity for the rest, what doom was  
     mine.  
  
         I think I hardly knew in that dread  
         hour  
 The fear that came anon ; I was trans-  
     formed  
 Into a champion of my race, made  
     strong  
 With a new courage, glorying to meet,  
 In all the ecstasy of sacrifice,  
 Death face to face. Some god, I know  
     not who,  
 O'erspread me, and despite my mother's  
     tears  
 And my stern father's grief, I met my  
     fate  
 Unshrinking.  
         When the moon rose clear from clouds  
 Once more again over the midnight sea,  
 And that vast watery plain, where were  
     before  
 Hundreds of happy homes, and well-  
     tilled fields,  
 And purple vineyards ; from my father's  
     towers  
 The white procession went along the  
     paths,

The high cliff paths, which well I loved  
 of old,  
 Among the myrtles. Priests with cens-  
 sers went  
 And offerings, robed in white, and  
 round their brows  
 The sacred fillet. With his nobles  
 walked  
 My sire with breaking heart. My  
 mother clung  
 To me the victim, and the young girls  
 went  
 With wailing and with tears. A solemn  
 strain  
 The soft flutes sounded, as we went by  
 night  
 To a wild headland, rock-based in the sea.

There on a sea-worn rock, upon the  
 verge,  
 To some rude stanchions, high above  
 my head,  
 They bound me. Out at sea, a black  
 reef rose,  
 Washed by the constant surge, wherein  
 a cave  
 Sheltered deep down the monster. The  
 sad queen  
 Would scarcely leave me, though the  
 priests shrunk back  
 In terror. Last, torn from my endless  
 kiss,  
 Swooning they bore her upwards. All  
 my robe  
 Fell from my lifted arms, and left dis-  
 played  
 The virgin treasure of my breasts; and  
 then  
 The white procession through the moon-  
 light streamed  
 Upwards, and soon their soft flutes  
 sounded low  
 Upon the high lawns, leaving me alone.

There stood I in the moonlight, left  
 alone  
 Against the sea-worn rock. Hardly I  
 knew,  
 Seeing only the bright moon and  
 summer sea,  
 Which gently heaved and surged, and  
 kissed the ledge  
 With smooth warm tides, what fate was  
 mine. I seemed,  
 Soothed by the quiet, to be resting still  
 Within my maiden chamber, and to  
 watch  
 The moonlight thro' my lattice. Then  
 again  
 Fear came, and then the pride of sacri-  
 fice  
 Filled me, as on the high cliff lawns I  
 heard  
 The wailing cries, the chanted liturgies,  
 And knew me bound forsaken to the  
 rock,  
 And saw the monster-haunted depths of  
 sea.

So all night long upon the sandy  
 shores  
 I heard the hollow murmur of the wave,  
 And all night long the hidden sea caves  
 made  
 A ghostly echo; and the sea birds  
 newed  
 Around me; once I heard a mocking  
 laugh,  
 As of some scornful Nereid; once the  
 waters  
 Broke louder on the scarped reefs, and  
 ebbd  
 As if the monster coming; but again  
 He came not, and the dead moon sank,  
 and still  
 Only upon the cliffs the wails, the  
 chants,



And I forsaken on my sea-worn rock,  
And lo, the monster-haunted depths of  
sea.

Till at the dead dark hour before the  
dawn,  
When sick men die, and scarcely fear  
itself  
Bore up my weary eyelids, a great surge  
Burst on the rock, and slowly, as it  
seemed,  
The sea sucked downward to its depths,  
laid bare  
The hidden reefs, and then before my  
eyes--  
Oh, terrible! a huge and loathsome  
snake  
Lifted his dreadful crest and scaly side  
Above the wave, in bulk and length so  
large,  
Coil after hideous coil, that scarce the  
eye  
Could measure its full horror; the great  
jaws  
Dropped as with gore; the large and  
furious eyes  
Were fired with blood and lust. Nearer  
he came,  
And slowly, with a devilish glare, more  
near,  
Till his hot fœtor choked me, and his  
tongue,  
Forked horribly from out his poisonous  
jaws,  
Played lightning-like around me. For  
awhile  
I swooned, and when I knew my life  
again,  
Death's bitterness was past.

Then with a bound  
Leaped up the broad red sun above the  
sea,  
And lit the horrid fulgour of his scales,

And struck upon the rock; and as I  
turned  
My head in the last agony of death,  
I knew a brilliant sunbeam swiftly  
leaping  
Downward from crag to crag, and felt  
new hope  
Where all was hopeless. On the hills  
a shout  
Of joy, and on the rocks the ring of  
mail;  
And while the hungry serpent's gloating  
eyes  
Were fixed on me, a knight in casque  
of gold  
And blazing shield, who with his flash-  
ing blade  
Fell on the monster. Long the conflict  
raged,  
Till all the rocks were red with blood  
and slime,  
And yet my champion from those  
horrible jaws  
And dreadful coils was scatheless. Zeus  
his sire  
Protected, and the awful shield he  
bore  
Withered the monster's life and left him  
cold;  
Dragging his helpless length and  
grovelling crest:  
And o'er his glaring eyes the films of  
death  
Crept, and his writhing flank and hiss  
of hate  
The great deep swallowed down, and  
blood and spume  
Rose on the waves; and a strange  
wailing cry  
Resounded o'er the waters, and the  
sea  
Bellowed within its hollow-sounding  
caves.

Then knew I, I was saved, and with  
me all  
The people. From my wrists he loosed  
the gyves,  
My hero ; and within his godlike arms  
Bore me by slippery rock and difficult  
path,  
To where my mother prayed. There  
was no need  
To ask my love. Without a spoken  
word  
Love lit his fires within me. My young  
heart  
Went forth, Love calling, and I gave  
him all.

Dost thou then wonder that the  
memory  
Of this supreme brief moment lingers  
still,  
While all the happy uneventful years  
Of wedded life, and all the fair young  
growth  
Of offspring, and the tranquil later joys,  
Nay, even the fierce eventful fight which  
raged  
When we were wedded, fade and are  
deceased,  
Lost in the irrecoverable past ?  
Nay, 'tis not strange. Always the  
memory  
Of overwhelming perils or great joys,  
Avoided or enjoyed, writes its own  
trace  
With such deep characters upon our  
lives,  
That all the rest are blotted. In this  
place,  
Where is not action, thought, or count  
of time,  
It is not weary as it were on earth,  
To dwell on these old memories. Time  
is born

Of dawns and sunsets, days that wax  
and wane  
And stamp themselves upon the yielding  
face  
Of fleeting human life ; but here there is  
Morning nor evening, act nor suffering,  
But only one unchanging Present holds  
Our being suspended. One blest day  
indeed,  
Or centuries ago or yesterday,  
There came among us one who was  
Divine,  
Not as our gods, joyous and breathing  
strength  
And careless life, but crowned with a  
new crown  
Of suffering, and a great light came  
with him,  
And with him he brought Time and a  
new sense  
Of dim, long-vanished years ; and since  
he passed  
I seem to see new meaning in my fate,  
And all the deeds I tell of. Evermore  
The young life comes, bound to the  
cruel rocks  
Alone. Before it the unfathomed sea  
Smiles, filled with monstrous growths  
that wait to take  
Its innocence. Far off the voice and  
hand  
Of love kneel by in agony, and entreat  
The seeming careless gods. Still when  
the deep  
Is smoothest, lo, the deadly fangs and  
coils  
Lurk near, to smite with death. And  
down the crags  
Of Duty, like a sudden sunbeam, springs  
Some golden soul half mortal, half  
divine,  
Heaven-sent, and breaks the chain ; and  
evermore.

For sacrifice they die, through sacrifice  
They live, and are for others, and no  
grief

Which smites the humblest but rever-  
berates

Thro' all the close-set files of life, and  
takes

The princely soul that from its royal  
towers

Looks down and sees the sorrow.

Sir, farewell!

If thou shouldst meet my children on  
the earth

Or here, for maybe it is long ago

Since I and they were living, say to  
them

I only muse a little here, and wait  
The waking."

And her lifted arms sank down  
Upon her knees, and as I passed I saw  
her

Gazing with soft rapt eyes, and on her  
lips

A smile as of a saint.

And then I saw

A manly hunter pace along the lea,

His bow upon his shoulder, and his  
spear

Poised idly in his hand: the face and  
form

Of vigorous youth; but in the full  
brown eyes

A timorous gaze as of a hunted hart;

Brute-like, yet human still, even as the  
Faun

Of old, the dumb brute passing into  
man,

And dowered with double nature. As  
he came

I seemed to question of his fate, and he  
Answered me thus:

"'Twas one hot afternoon

That I, a hunter, wearied with my day,  
Heard my hounds baying fainter on  
the hills,

Led by the flying hart; and when the  
sound

Faded and all was still, I turned to seek,  
O'ercome by heat and thirst, a little  
glade,

Beloved of old, where, in the shadowy  
wood,

The clear cold crystal of a mossy pool  
Lipped the soft emerald marge, and  
gave again

The flower-starred lawn where oftentimes  
overspent

I lay upon the grass and careless bathed  
My limbs in the sweet lymph.

But as I neared

The hollow, sudden through the leaves  
I saw

A throng of wood-nymphs fair, sporting  
undraped

Round one, a goddess. She with timid  
hand

Loosened her zone, and glancing round  
let fall

Her robe from neck and bosom, pure  
and bright,

(For it was Dian's self I saw, none  
else)

As when she frees her from a fleece of  
cloud

And swims along the deep blue sea of  
heaven

On sweet June nights. Silent awhile I  
stood,

Rooted with awe, and fain had turned  
to fly,

But feared by careless footstep to  
affright

Those chaste cold eyes. Great awe  
and reverence  
Held me, and fear; then Love with  
passing wing  
Fanned me, and held my eyes, and  
checked my breath,  
Signing 'Beware!'

So for a time I watched,  
Breathless as one a brooding nightmare  
holds,  
Who fleeth some great fear, yet fleeth  
not;  
Till the last flutter of lawn, and veil no  
more  
Obscured, and all the beauty of my  
dreams  
Assailed my sense. But ere I raised  
my eyes,  
As one who fain would look and see  
the sun,  
The first glance dazed my brain. Only  
I knew  
The perfect outline flow in tender  
curves,  
To break in doubled charms; only a  
haze  
Of creamy white, and dimpled depths  
divine;  
And then no more. For lo! a sudden  
chill,  
And such thick mist as shuts the hills  
at eve,  
Oppressed me gazing; and a heaven-  
sent shame,  
An awe, a fear, a reverence for the  
unknown,  
Froze all the springs of will and left  
me cold,  
And blinded all the longings of my eyes,  
Leaving such dim reflection still as  
mocks  
Him who has looked on a great light,  
and keeps

On his closed eyes the image. Pre-  
sently,  
My fainting soul, safe hidden for awhile  
Deep in Life's mystic shades, renewed  
herself,  
And straight, the innocent brute within  
the man  
Bore on me, and with half-averted eye  
I gazed upon the secret.

As I looked,  
A radiance, white as beamed the frosty  
moon  
On the mad boy and slew him, beamed  
on me;  
Made chill my pulses, checked my life  
and heat;  
Transformed me, withered all my soul,  
and left  
My being burnt out. For lo! the  
dreadful eyes  
Of Godhead met my gaze, and through  
the mask  
And thick disguise of sense, as through  
a wood,  
Pierced to my life. Then suddenly I  
knew  
An altered nature, touched by no desire  
For that which showed so lovely, but  
declined  
To lower levels. Nought of fear or awe,  
Nothing of love was mine. Wide-eyed  
I gazed,  
But saw no spiritual beam to blight  
My brain with too much beauty, no  
undraped  
And awful majesty; only a brute,  
Dumb charm, like that which draws  
the brute to it,  
Unknowing it is drawn. So gradually  
I knew a dull content o'ercloud my  
sense,  
And unabashed I gazed, like that dumb  
bird

Which thinks no thought and speaks  
no word, yet fronts  
The sun that blinded Homer—all my  
fear  
Sunk with my shame, in a base happi-  
ness.

But as I gazed, and careless turned  
and passed  
Through the thick wood, forgetting  
what had been,  
And thinking thoughts no longer, swift  
there came  
A mortal terror : voices that I knew,  
My own hounds' bayings that I loved  
before,  
As with them often o'er the purple hills  
I chased the flying hart from slope to  
slope,  
Before the slow sun climbed the  
Eastern peaks,  
Until the swift sun smote the Western  
plain ;  
Whom often I had cheered by voice  
and glance,  
Whom often I had checked with hand  
and thong,  
Grim followers, like the passions, firing  
me ;  
True servants, like the strong nerves,  
urging me  
On many a fruitless chase, to find and  
take  
Some too swift-fleeting beauty ; faithful  
feet  
And tongues, obedient always : these  
I knew,  
Clothed with a new-born force and  
fiercer grown,  
And stronger than their master ; and  
I thought,  
What if they tare me with their jaws,  
nor cared

That once I ruled them,—brute pur-  
suing brute,  
And I the quarry? Then I turned and  
fled,—

If it was I indeed that feared and fled—  
Down the long glades, and through the  
tangled brakes,

Where scarce the sunlight pierced ;  
fled on and on,

And panted, self-pursued. But ever-  
more

The dissonant music which I knew so  
sweet,

When by the windy hills, the echoing  
vales,

And whispering pines it rang, now far,  
now near,

As from my rushing steed I leant and  
cheered

With voice and horn the chase—this  
brought to me

Fear of I knew not what, which bade  
me fly,

Fly always, fly ; but when my heart  
stood still,

And all my limbs were stiffened as I fled,  
Just as the white moon ghost-like  
climbed the sky,

Nearer they came and nearer, baying  
loud,

With bloodshot eyes and red jaws  
dripping foam ;

And when I strove to check their  
savagery,

Speaking with words ; no voice articu-  
late came,

Only a dumb, low bleat. Then all the  
throng

Leapt swift on me, and tare me as I lay,  
And left me man again.

Wherefore I walk  
Along these dim fields peopled with  
the ghosts

<p>Of heroes who have left the ways of earth For this faint ghost of them. Some- times I think, Pondering on what has been, that all my days Were shadows, all my life an allegory ; And, though I know sometimes some fainter gleam Of the old beauty move me, and some- times Some heat of the old pulses ; that my fate, For ever hurrying on in hot pursuit, To fall at length self-slain, was but a tale Writ large by Zeus upon a mortal life, Writ large, and yet a riddle. For sometimes I read its meaning thus : Life is a chase, And Man the hunter, always following on, With hounds of rustling thought or fiery sense, Some hidden truth or beauty, fleeting still For ever through the thick-leaved coverts deep And wind-worn wolds of time. And if he turn A moment from the hot pursuit to seize Some chance-brought sweetness, other than the search To which his soul is set,—some dal- liance, Some outward shape of Art, some lower love, Some charm of wealth and sleek con- tent and home,— Then, if he check an instant, the swift chase Of fierce untempered energies which pursue,</p>	<p>With jaws unsated and a thirst for act, Bears down on him with clanging shock, and whelms His prize and him in ruin. And sometimes I seem to myself a thinker, who at last, Amid the chase and capture of low ends, Pausing by some cold well of hidden thought Comes on some perfect truth, and looks and looks Till the fair vision blinds him. And the sun Of all his lower self pursuing him, The strong brute forces, the unchecked desires, Finding him bound and speechless, deem him now No more their master, but some soul- less thing : And leap on him, and seize him, and possess His life, till through death's gate he pass to life, And, his own ghost, revives. But looks no more Upon the truth unveiled, save through a cloud Of creed and faith and longing, which shall change One day to perfect knowledge. But whoe'er Shall read the riddle of my life, I walk In this dim land amid dim ghosts of kings, As one day thou shalt ; meantime, fare thou well."  Then passed he ; and I marked him slowly go Along the winding ways of that weird land, And vanish in a wood.</p>
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And next I knew  
 A woman perfect as a young man's  
     dream,  
 And breathing as it seemed the nimble  
     air  
 Of the fair days of old, when man was  
     young  
 And life an Epic. Round the lips a  
     smile  
 Subtle and deep and sweet as hers who  
     looks  
 From the old painter's canvas, and  
     derides  
 Life and the riddle of things, the aim-  
     less strife,  
 The folly of Love, as who has proved  
     it all,  
 Enjoyed and suffered. In the lovely  
     eyes  
 A weary look, no other than the gaze  
 Which oftentimes as the rapid chariot  
     whirls,  
 And oftentimes by the glaring midnight  
     streets,  
 Gleams out and chills our thought.  
     And yet not guilt  
 Nor sorrow was it; only weariness,  
 No more, and still most lovely. As I  
     named  
 Her name in haste, she looked with  
     half surprise,  
 And thus she seemed to speak :  
     " What? Dost thou know,  
 Thou too, the fatal glances which be-  
     guiled  
 Those strong rude chiefs of old? Has  
     not the gloom  
 Of this dim land withdrawn from out  
     mine eyes

The glamour which once filled them?  
     Does my cheek  
 Retain the round of youth and still  
     defy

The wear of immemorial centuries?  
 And this low voice, long silent, keeps  
     it still

The music of old time? Aye, in thine  
     eyes

I read it, and within thine eyes I see  
 Thou knowest me, and the story of my  
     life

Sung by the blind old bard when I was  
     dead,

And all my lovers dust. I know thee  
     not,

Thee nor thy gods, yet would I soothly  
     swear

I was not all to blame for what has  
     been,

The long fight, the swift death, the  
     woes, the tears,

The brave lives spent, the humble  
     homes uptorn,

To gain one poor fair face. It was  
     not I

That curved these lips into this subtle  
     smile,

Or gave these eyes their fire, nor yet  
     made round

This supple frame. It was not I, but  
     Love,

Love mirroring himself in all things  
     fair,

Love that projects himself upon a life,  
 And dotes on his own image.

    Ah! the days,  
 The weary years of Love and feasts and  
     gold,

The hurried flights, the din of clatter-  
     ing hoofs

At midnight, when the heroes dared  
     for me,

And bore me o'er the hills ; the swift pursuits	Hunger, and plague, and every phase of woe
Baffled and lost ; or when from isle to isle	Vexed all the land for me. I have heard the curse
The high-oared galley spread its wings and rose	Unspoken, when the wife widowed for me
Over the swelling surges, and I saw, Time after time, the scarce familiar town,	Clasped to her heart her orphans starved for me ;
The shadowy hills, the well-loved palaces,	As I swept proudly by. I have prayed the gods,
The gleaming temples fade, and all for me,	Hating my own fair face which wrought such woe,
Me the dead prize, the shell, the soul- less ghost,	Some plague divine might light on it and leave
The husk of a true woman ; the fond words	My curse a ruin. Yet I think indeed They had not cursed but pitied, those true wives
Wasted on careless ears, that feigned to hear,	Who mourned their humble lords, and straining felt
Of love to me unloving ; the rich feasts, The silken dalliance and soft luxury, The fair observance and high reverence For me who cared not, to whatever land	The innocent thrill which swells the mother's heart
My kingly lover snatched me. I have known	Who clasps her growing boy ; had they but known
How small a fence Love sets between the king	The lifeless life, the pain of hypocrite smiles,
And the strong hind, who breeds his brood, and dies	The dead load of caresses simulated, When Love stands shuddering by to see his fires
Upon the field he tills. I have ex- changed	Lit for the shrine of gold. What if they felt
People for people, crown for glittering crown,	The weariness of loveless love which grew
Through every change a queen, and held my state	And through the jealous palace portals seized
Hateful, and sickened in my soul to lie Stretched on soft cushions to the lutes' low sound,	The caged unloving woman, sick of toys,
While on the wasted fields the clang of arms	Sick of her gilded chains, her ease, herself,
Rang, and the foemen perished, and swift death,	Till for sheer weariness she flew to mee Some new unloved seducer? What if they knew
	No childish loving hands, or worse than all,



Had borne them sullen to a sire un-  
loved,

And left them without pain? I might  
have been,

I too, a loving mother and chaste wife,  
Had Fate so willed.

For I remember well  
How one day straying from my father's  
hall,

Seeking anemones and violets,  
A girl in Spring-time, when the heart  
makes Spring

Within the budding bosom, that I  
came

Of a sudden through a wood upon a  
bay,

A little sunny land-locked bay, whose  
banks

Sloped gently downward to the yellow  
sand,

Where the blue wave creamed soft  
with fairy foam,

And oft the Nereids sported. As I  
strayed

Singing, with fresh-pulled violets in my  
hair

And bosom, and my hands were full of  
flowers,

I came upon a little milk-white lamb,  
And took it in my arms and fondled it,

And wreathed its neck with flowers,  
and sang to it

And kissed it, and the Spring was in  
my life,

And I was glad.

And when I raised my eyes  
Behold, a youthful shepherd with his  
crook

Stood by me and regarded as I lay,  
Tall, fair, with clustering curls, and  
front that wore

A budding manhood. As I looked a  
fear

Came o'er me, lest he were some youth-  
ful god

Disguised in shape of man, so fair he  
was ;

But when he spoke, the kindly face was  
full

Of manhood, and the large eyes full of  
fire

Drew me without a word, and all the  
flowers

Fell from me, and the little milk-white  
lamb

Strayed through the brake, and took  
with it the white

Fair years of childhood. Time fulfilled  
my being

With passion like a cup, and with one  
kiss

Lest me a woman.

Ah ! the precious hours,  
When on the warm bank crowned with  
flowers we sat

And thought no harm, and his thin  
reed pipe made

Low music, and no witness of our love  
Intruded, but the tinkle of the flock

Stole from the hill, and 'neath the  
odorous shade

We dreamed away the day, and watched  
the waves

Smile shoreward, and beyond the  
sylvan capes

The innumerable laughter of the sea !

Ah youth and love ! So passed the  
happy days

Till twilight, and I stole as in a dream  
Homeward, and lived as in a happy  
dream,

And when they spoke answered as in a  
dream,

And through the darkness saw, as in a  
glass,

<p>             The happy, happy day, and thrilled and              glowed              And kept my love in sleep, and longed              for dawn              And scarcely stayed for hunger, and              with morn              Stole eager to the little wood, and fed              My life with kisses. Ah! the joyous              days              Of innocence, when Love was Queen              in heaven,              And nature unproved! Break they              then still,              Those azure circles, on a golden shore?              Smiles there no glade upon the older              earth              Where spite of all, gray wisdom, and              new gods,              Young lovers dream within each other's              arms              Silent, by shadowy grove, or sunlit sea?                Ah days too fair to last! There              came a night              When I lay longing for my love, and              knew              Sudden the clang of hoofs, the broken              doors,              The clash of swords, the shouts, the              groans, the stain              Of red upon the marble, the fixed gaze              Of dead and dying eyes,—that was the              time              When first I looked on death,—and              when I woke              From my deep swoon, I felt the night              air cool              Upon my brow, and the cold stars look              down,              As swift we galloped o'er the darkling              plain;              And saw the chill sea glimpses slowly              wake,           </p>	<p>             With arms unknown around me. When              the dawn              Broke swift, we panted on the pathless              steeps,              And so by plain and mountain till we              came              To Athens, where they kept me till I              grew              Fairer with every year, and many              wooed,              Heroes and chieftains, but I loved not              one.                And then the avengers came and              snatched me back              To Sparta. All the dark high-crested              chiefs              Of Argos wooed me, striving king              with king              For one fair foolish face, nor knew I              kept              No heart to give them. Yet since I              was grown              Weary of honeyed words and suit of              love,              I wedded a brave chief, dauntless and              true.              But what cared I? I could not prize              at all              His honest service. I had grown so              tired              Of loving and of love, that when they              brought              News that the fairest shepherd on the              hills,              Having done himself to death for his              lost love,              Lay, like a lovely statue, cold and white              Upon the golden sand, I hardly knew              More than a passing pang. Love, like              a flower,              Love, springing up too tall in a young              breast,           </p>
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<p>The growth of morning, Life's too scorching sun Had withered long ere noon. Love, like a flame On his own altar offering up my heart, Had burnt my being to ashes. Was it love That drew me then to Paris? He was fair, I grant you, fairer than a summer morn, Fair with a woman's fairness, yet in arms A hero, but he never had my heart, Not love for him allured me, but the thirst For freedom, if in more than thought I erred, And was not rapt but willing. For my child Born to an unloved father, loved me not, The fresh sea called, the galleys plunged, and I Fled willing from my prison and the pain Of undesired caresses, and the wind Was fair, and on the third day as we sailed, My heart was glad within me when I saw The towers of Ilium rise beyond the</p> <p>Ab, the long years, the melancholy years, The miserable melancholy years ! For soon the new grew old, and then I grew Weary of him, of all, of pomp and state And novel splendour. Yet at times I knew Some thrill of pride within me as I saw</p>	<p>From those high walls, a prisoner and a foe, The swift ships flock at anchor in the bay, The hasty landing and the flash of arms, The lines of royal tents upon the plain, The close-shut gates, the chivalry within Issuing in all its pride to meet the shock Of the bold chiefs without ; so year by year The haughty challenge from the warring hosts Rang forth, and I with a divided heart Saw victory incline, now here, now there, And helpless marked the Argive chiefs I knew, The spouse I left, the princely loves of old, Now with each other strive, and now with Troy : The brave pomp of the morn, the fair strong limbs, The glittering panoply, the bold young hearts, Athirst for fame of war, and with the night The broken spear, the shattered helm, the plume Dyed red with blood, the ghastly dying face, And nerveless limbs laid lifeless. And I knew The stainless Hector whom I could have loved, But that a happy love made blind his eyes To all my baleful beauty ; fallen and dragged His noble, godlike head upon the sand By young Achilles' chariot ; him in turn Fallen and slain ; my fair false Paris slain ;</p>
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Plague, famine, battle, raging now  
within,  
And now without, for many a weary  
year,  
Summer and winter, till I loathed to  
live,  
Who was indeed, as well they said, the  
Hell  
Of men, and fleets, and cities. As I  
stood  
Upon the walls, oftentimes a longing  
came,  
Looking on rage, and fight, and blood,  
and death,  
To end it all, and dash me down and  
die ;  
But no god helped me. Nay, one day  
I mind  
I would entreat them. ' Pray you,  
lords, be men.  
What fatal charm is this which Atë  
gives  
To one poor foolish face ? Be strong,  
and turn  
In peace, forget this glamour, get you  
home  
With all your fleets and armies, to the  
land  
I love no longer, where your faithful  
wives  
Pine widowed of their lords, and your  
young boys  
Grow wild to manhood. I have nought  
to give,  
No heart, nor prize of love for any  
man,  
Nor recompense. I am the ghost alone  
Of the fair girl -ye knew ; she still  
abides,  
If she still lives and is not wholly dead,  
Stretched on a flowery bank upon the  
sea  
In fair heroic Argos. Leave this form

**That is no other than the outward shell  
Of a once loving woman.'**

As I spake,  
My pity fired my eyes and flushed my  
cheek

With some soft charm ; and as I spread  
my hands,

The purple, glancing down a little, left  
The marble of my breasts and one pink  
bud

Upon the gleaming snows. And as I  
looked

With a mixed pride and terror, I beheld  
The brute rise up within them, and my  
words

Fall barren on them. So I sat apart,  
Nor ever more looked forth, while every  
day

**Brought its own woc.**

The melancholy years,  
The miserable melancholy years,  
Crept onward till the midnight terror  
came,

And by the glare of burning streets I  
saw

Palace and temple reel in ruin and fall,  
And the long-baffled legions, bursting  
in

By gate and bastion, blunted sword and  
spear

**With unresisted slaughter. From my  
tower**

I saw the good old king ; his kindly  
eyes

In agony, and all his reverend hairs  
Dabbled with blood, as the fierce  
foeman thrust

And stabbed him as he lay ; the youths,  
the girls,

Whom day by day I knew, their silken  
ease

And royal luxury changed for blood  
and tears.

<p>             Haled forth to death or worse. Then                  a great hate              Of life and fate seized on me, and I                  rose              And rushed among them, crying, 'See,                  'tis I,              I who have brought this evil ! Kill me !                  kill              The fury that is I, yet is not I !              And let my soul go outward through                  the wound              Made clean by blood to Hades ! Let                  me die,              Not these who did no wrong !' But                  not a hand              Was raised, and all shrank back amazed,                  afraid,              As from a goddess. Then I swooned                  and fell              And knew no more, and when I woke                  I felt              My husband's arms around me, and the                  wind              Blew fair for Greece, and the beaked                  galley plunged ;              And where the towers of Ilium rose of                  old,              A pall of smoke above a glare of fire.           </p> <p>             What then in the near future ?                                  Ten long years              Bring youth and love to that deep                  summer-tide              When the full noisy current of our                  lives              Creeps dumb through wealth of flowers.                  I think I knew              Somewhat of peace at last, with my                  good Lord              Who loved too much, to palter with                  the past,              Flushed with the present. Young Her-           </p>	<p>             Had grown from child to woman. She                  was wed ;              And was not I her mother ? At the                  pomp              Of solemn nuptials and requited love,              I prayed she might be happy, happier                  far              Than ever I was ; so in tranquil ease              I lived a queen long time, and because                  wealth              And high observance can make sweet                  our days              When youth's swift joy is past, I did                  requite              With what I might, not love, the                  kindly care              Of him I loved not ; pomps and robes                  of price              And chariots held me. But when Fate                  cut short              His life and love, his sons who were                  not mine              Reigned in his stead, and hated me                  and mine :              And knowing I was friendless, I sailed                  forth              Once more across the sea, seeking for                  rest              And shelter. Still I knew that in my                  eyes              Love dwelt, and all the baleful charm                  of old              Burned as of yore, scarce dimmed as                  yet by time :              I saw it in the mirror of the sea,              I saw it in the youthful seamen's                  eyes,              And was half proud again I had such                  power              Who now kept nothing else. So one                  calm eve,              Behold, a sweet fair isle blushed like a           </p>
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Upon the summer sea : there my swift  
ship  
Cast anchor, and they told me it was  
Rhodes.

There, in a little wood above the sea,  
Like that dear wood of yore, I wandered  
forth

Forlorn, and all my seamen were apart,  
And I, alone ; when at the close of day  
I knew myself surrounded by strange  
churls

With angry eyes, and one who ordered  
them,

A woman, whom I knew not, but who  
walked

In mien and garb a queen. She, with  
the fire

Of hate within her eyes, ' Quick, bind  
her, men !

I know her ; bind her fast ! ' Then to  
the trunk

Of a tall plane they bound me with  
rude cords

That cut my arms. And meantime,  
far below,

The sun was gilding fair with dying  
rays

Isle after isle and purple wastes of sea.

And then she signed to them, and all  
withdrew

Among the woods and left us, face to  
face,

Two women. Ere I spake, ' I know,'  
she cried,

' I know that evil fairness. This it  
was,

Or ever he had come across my life,

That made him cold to me, who had  
my love

And left me half a heart. If all my  
life

Of wedlock was but half a life, what  
fiend

Came 'twixt my love and me, but that  
fair face ?

What left his children orphans, but  
that face ?

And me a widow ? Fiend ! I have  
thee now ;

Thou hast not long to live. I will  
requite

Thy murders ; yet, oh fiend ! that art  
so fair,

Were it not haply better to deface  
Thy fatal loveliness, and leave thee  
bare

Of all thy baleful power ? And yet I  
doubt,

And looking on thy face I doubt the  
more,

Lest all thy dower of beauty be the  
gift

Of Aphrodité, and I fear to fight  
Against the immortal Gods.'

Eyen with the word,  
And she relenting, all the riddle of  
life

Flashed through me, and the inextric-  
able coil

Of Being, and the immeasurable depths  
And irony of Fate, burst on my thought,  
And left me smiling in the eyes of  
death,

With this deep smile thou seest. Then  
with a shriek

The woman leapt on me, and with  
blind rage

Strangled my life. And when she had  
done the deed

She swooned, and those her followers  
hasting back

Fell prone upon their knees before the  
corpse

As to a goddess. Then one went and brought  
 A sculptor, and within a jewelled shrine  
 They set me in white marble, bound  
 to a tree  
 Of marble. And they came and knelt  
 to me,  
 Young men and maidens, through the  
 secular years,  
 While the old gods bore sway, but I  
 was here,  
 And now they kneel no longer, for the  
 world  
 Has gone from beauty.

But I think, indeed,

They well might worship still, for never  
 yet  
 Was any thought or thing of beauty  
 born  
 Except with suffering. That poor  
 wretch who thought  
 I injured her, stealing the foolish heart  
 Which she prized but I could not, what  
 knew she  
 Of that I suffered? She had loved her  
 love,  
 Though unrequited, and had borne to  
 him  
 Children who loved her. What if she  
 had been  
 Loved yet unloving : all the fire of love  
 Burnt out before love's time in one  
 brief blaze  
 Of passion. Ah, poor fool ! I pity her,  
 Being blest and yet unthankful, and  
 forgive,  
 Now that she is a ghost as I, the hand  
 Which loosed my load of life. For  
 scarce indeed  
 Could any god who cares for mortal  
 men  
 Have ever kept me happy. I had tired  
 Of simple loving, doubtless, as I tired

Of splendour and being loved. There  
 be some souls  
 For which love is enough, content to  
 bear  
 From youth to age, from chesnut locks  
 to gray  
 The load of common, uneventful life  
 And penury. But I was not of these ;  
 I know not now, if it were best indeed  
 That I had reared my simple shepherd  
 brood,  
 And lived and died unknown in some  
 poor hut  
 Among the Argive hills ; or lived a  
 queen  
 As I did, knowing every day that  
 dawned  
 Some high emprise and glorious, and  
 in death  
 To fill the world with song. Not the  
 same meed  
 The gods mete out for all, or She, the  
 dread  
 Necessity, who rules both gods and men,  
 Some to dishonour, some to honour  
 moulds,  
 To happiness some, some to unhappi-  
 ness.  
 We are what Zeus has made us, dis-  
 cords playing  
 In the great music, but the harmony  
 Is sweeter for them, and the great  
 spheres ring  
 In one accordant hymn.

But thou, if e'er

There come a daughter of thy love, oh  
 pray  
 To all thy gods, lest haply they should  
 mar  
 Her life with too great beauty !"

So she ceased,

The fairest woman that the poet's  
 dream

Or artist hand has fashioned. All the  
gloom  
Seemed lightened round her, and I  
heard the sound  
Of her melodious voice when all was  
still,  
And the dim twilight took her.

Next there came  
Two who together walked : one with  
a lyre  
Of gold, which gave no sound ; the  
other hung  
Upon his breast, and closely clung to  
him,  
Spent in a tender longing. As they  
came,  
I heard her gentle voice recounting o'er  
Some ancient tale, and these the words  
she said :

“Dear voice and lyre now silent,  
which I heard  
Across yon sullen river, bringing to me  
All my old life, while he, the ferry-  
man,  
Heard and obeyed, and the grim  
monster heard  
And fawned on you. Joyous thou  
cam'st and free  
Like a white sunbeam from the dear  
blithe earth,  
Where suns shone clear, and moons  
beamed bright, and streams  
Laughed with a rippling music,—nor as  
here  
The dumb stream stole, the veiled sky  
slept, the fields  
Were lost in twilight. Like a truant  
breeze,

Which steals in summer from the gates  
of dawn  
To kiss the fields of spice, and wakes  
to life  
Their slumbering perfume, through this  
silent land  
Of whispering voices and of half-closed  
eyes,  
Where scarce a footstep sounds, nor  
any strain  
Of earthly song, thou cam'st ; and  
suddenly  
The pale cheeks flushed a little, the  
murmured words  
Rose to a faint, thin treble ; the throng  
of ghosts  
Pacing along the sunless ways and  
still,  
Felt a new life. Thou camest, dear,  
and straight  
The dull cold river broke in sparkling  
foam,  
The pale and scentless flowers grew  
perfumed ; last  
To the dim chamber, where with the  
sad queen  
I sat in gloom, and silently inwove  
Dead wreaths of amaranths ; thy music  
came  
Laden with life, and I, who seemed to  
know  
Not life's voice only, but my own,  
arose  
Along the hollow pathways following  
The sound which brought back earth  
and life and love,  
And memory and longing. Yet I went  
With half-reluctant footsteps, as of  
one  
Whom passion draws, or some high  
fantasy,  
Despite himself, because some subtle  
spell,



<p>Part born of dread to cross that sullen stream And its grim guardians, part of secret shame Of the young airs and freshness of the earth, Being that I was, enchained me.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Then at last,</p> <p>From voice and lyre so high a strain arose As trembled on the utter verge of being, And thrilling, poured out life. Thus nearer drawn I walked with thee, enclosed by honeyed sound And soft environments of harmony, Beyond the ghostly gates, beyond the dim Calm fields, where the beetle hummed and the pale owl Stole noiseless from the copse, and the white blooms Stretched thin for lack of sun : so fair a light Offspring of consonant airs environed me. Nor looked I backward, as we seemed to move To some high goal of thought and life and love, Like twin birds flying fast with equal wing Out of the night, to meet the coming sun Above a sea. But on thy dear fair eyes, The eyes that well I knew on the old earth, I looked not, for with still averted gaze Thou leddest, and I followed ; for, indeed,</p>	<p>While that high strain was sounding, I was rapt In faith and a high courage, driving out All doubt and discontent and womanish fear, Nay, even love itself. But when awhile It sank a little, or seemed to sink and fall To lower levels, seeing that use makes blunt The too accustomed ear, straightway, desire To look once more on thy recovered eyes Seized me, and oft I called with piteous voice, Beseeching thee to turn. But thou long time Wert even as one unmindful, with grave sign And waving hand, denying. At the last, When now we neared the stream, on whose far shore Lay life, great terror took me, and I shrieked Thy name, as in despair. Then thou, as one Who knows him set in some great jeopardy, A swift death fronting him on either hand, Didst slowly turning gaze ; and lo ! I saw Thine eyes grown awful, life that looked on death, Clear purity on black and cankered sin, The immortal on corruption,—not the eyes That erst I knew in life, but dread- fuller, And stranger. As I looked, I seemed to swoon,</p>
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Some blind force whirled me back, and  
when I woke

I saw thee vanish in the middle stream,  
A speck on the dull waters, taking  
with thee

My life, and leaving Love with me.  
But I

Not for myself bewail, but all for thee,  
Who, but for me, wert now among the  
stars

With thy great Lord; I sitting at thy  
feet :

But now the fierce and unrestrained rout  
Of passions woman-natured, finding  
thee

Scornful of love within thy lonely cell,  
With blind rage falling on thee, tore  
thy limbs,

And left them to the Muses' sepulture,  
While thy soul dwells in Hades. But  
I wail

My weakness always, who for Love  
destroyed

The life that was my Love. I prithee,  
dear,

Forgive me if thou canst, who hast lost  
heaven

To save a loving woman."

He with voice  
Sweeter than any mortal melody,  
And plaintive as the music that is  
made

By the Æolian strings, or the sad bird  
That sings of summer nights :

"Eurydice,  
Dear love, be comforted; not once  
alone

That which thou mournest is, but day  
by day

Some lonely soul, which walks apart  
and feeds

On high hill pastures, far from herds  
of men,

Comes to the low fat fields, and sunny  
vales

Joyous with fruits and flowers, and the  
white arms

Of laughing love; and there awhile he  
stays

Content, forgetting all the joys he  
knew,

When first the morning broke upon  
the hills,

And the keen air breathed from the  
Eastern gates

Like a pure draught of wine; forget-  
ting all

The strains which float, as from a  
nearer heaven,

To him who treads at dawn the un-  
trodden snows,

While all the warm world sleeps;—  
forgetting these

And all things that have been. And  
if he gain

To raise to his own heights the simpler  
souls

That dwell upon the plains, the un-  
tutored thought,

The muscleless lives, the unawakened  
brain

That yet might soar, then is he blest  
indeed.

But if he fail, then, leaving love  
behind,

The wider love of the race, the closer  
love

Of some congenial soul, he turns again  
To the old difficult steep, and there  
alone

Pines, till the widowed passions of his  
heart

Tear him and rend his soul, and drive  
him down

To the low plains he left. And there  
he dwells,

Missing the nearer skies, and the white  
 peaks,  
 And the keen air of old ; but in their  
 stead  
 Finding the soft sweet sun of the vale,  
 the clouds  
 Which veil the heavens indeed, but  
 give the rains  
 That feed the streams of life and make  
 earth green,  
 And bring at last the harvest. So I  
 walk  
 In this dim land content with thee, O  
 Love,  
 Untouched by any yearning of regret  
 For those old days ; nor that the lyre  
 which made  
 Erewhile such potent music now is  
 dumb ;  
 Nor that the voice that once could  
 move the earth  
 (Zeus speaking through it), speaks in  
 household words  
 Of homely love : Love is enough for  
 me  
 With thee, O dearest ; and perchance  
 at last,  
 Zeus willing, this dumb lyre and  
 whispered voice  
 Shall wake, by Love inspired, to such  
 clear note  
 As soars above the stars, and swelling,  
 lifts  
 Our souls to highest heaven."

Then he stooped,  
 And, folded in one long embrace, they  
 went  
 And faded. And I cried, "Oh, strong  
 God, Love,  
 Mightier than Death and Hell !"

And then I chanced  
 On a fair woman, whose sad eyes were  
 full  
 Of a fixed self-reproach, like his who  
 knows  
 Himself the fountain of his grief, and  
 pines  
 In self-inflicted sorrow. As I spake  
 Enquiring of her grief, she answered  
 thus :

"Stranger, thou seest of all the  
 shades below  
 The most unhappy. Others sought  
 their love  
 In death, and found it, dying ; but for  
 me  
 The death that took me, took from  
 me my love,  
 And left me comfortless. No load I  
 bear  
 Like those dark wicked women, who  
 have slain  
 Their Lords for lust or anger, whom  
 the dread  
 Propitious Ones within the pit below  
 Punish and purge of sin ; only unfaith,  
 If haply want of faith be not a crime  
 Blacker than murder, when we fail to  
 trust  
 One worthy of all faith, and folly bring  
 No harder recompense than comes of  
 scorn  
 And loathing of itself.

Ah, fool, fool, fool,  
 Who didst mistrust thy love, who was  
 the best,  
 And truest, manliest soul with whom  
 the gods  
 Have ever blest the earth ; so brave,  
 so strong,  
 Fired with such burning hate of power-  
 ful ill,

So loving of the race, so swift to raise  
The strenuous arm and ponderous club,  
and smite  
All monstrous growths with ruin—Zeus  
himself  
Showed scarce more mighty—and yet  
was the while  
A very man, not cast in mould too  
fine  
For human love, but oftentimes snared  
and caught  
By womanish wiles, fast held within  
the net  
His passions wove. Oh, it was joy to  
hear  
How he went forth, the champion of  
his race,  
Conquering in warfare as in love, now  
bent  
To more than human tasks, now lapt  
in ease,  
Now suffering, now enjoying. Strong,  
vast soul,  
Tuned to heroic deeds, and set on high  
Above the range of common petty  
sins—  
Too high to mate with an unequal  
soul,  
Too full of striving for contented days.

Ah me, how well I do recall the  
cause  
Of all our ills! I was a happy bride  
When that dark Até which pursues the  
steps  
Of heroes—innocent blood-guiltiness—  
Drove us to exile, and I joyed to be  
His own, and share his pain. To a  
swift stream  
Fleeing we came, where a rough ferry-  
man  
Waited, more brute than man. My  
hero plunged

In those fierce depths and battled with  
their flow,  
And with great labour gained the  
strand, and bade  
The monster speed give to him. But  
with lust  
And brutal cunning in his eyes, the  
thing  
Seized me and turned to fly with me,  
when swift  
An arrow hissed from the unerring bow,  
Pierced him, and loosed his grasp. Then  
as his eyes  
Grew glazed in death there came in  
them a gleam  
Of what I know was hate, and he said,  
'Take  
This white robe. It is costly. See,  
my blood  
Has stained it but a little. I did wrong:  
I know it, and repent me. If there  
come  
A time when he grows cold—for all the  
race  
Of heroes wander, nor can any love  
Fix theirs for long—take it and wrap  
him in it,  
And he shall love again.' Then, from  
the strange  
Deep look within his eyes I shrank in  
fear,  
And left him half in pity, and I went  
To meet my Lord, who rose from that  
fierce stream  
Fair as a god.

Ah me, the weary days  
We women live, spending our anxious  
souls,  
Consumed with jealous fancies, hunger-  
ing still  
For the beloved voice and ear and eye,  
And hungering all in vain! For life is  
more

<p>To youthful manhood than to sit at home Before the hearth to watch the children's ways, And lead the life of petty household care Which doth content us women. Day by day I pined in Trachis for my love, while he, Now in some warlike exploit busied, now Slaying some monster, now at some fair court, Resting awhile till some new enterprise Called him, returned not. News of treacheries Avenged, friends succoured, dreadful monsters slain, Came from him: always triumph, always fame, And honour, and success, and reverence, And sometimes, words of love for me who pined For more than words, and would have gone to him But that the toils of such high errantry Asked more than woman's strength. So the slow years Vexed me alone in Trachis, left forlorn In solitude, nor hearing at the gate The frank and cheering voice, nor on the stair The heavy tread, nor feeling the strong arm Around me in the darkling night, when all My being ran slow. Last, subtle whispers came Of womanish wiles which kept my Lord from me, And one who, young and fair, a fresh- blown life And virgin, younger, fairer far than I</p>	<p>When first he loved me, held him in the toils Of scarce dissembled love. Not easily Might I believe this evil, but at last The oft-repeated malice finding me Forlorn, and sitting imp-like at my ear, Possessed me, and the fire of jealous love Raged through my veins, not turned as yet to hate— Too well I loved for that—but breeding in me Unfaith in him. Love, setting him so high And self so low, betrayed me, and I prayed, Constrained to hold him false, the immortal gods To make him love again. But still he came not. And still the maddening rumours worked, and still 'Fair, young, and a king's daughter,' the same words Smote me and pierced me. Oh, there is no pain In Hades—nay, nor deepest Hell itself, Like that of jealous hearts, the torture- pain Which racked my life so long. Till one fair morn There came a joyful message. 'He has come! And at the shrine upon the promontory, The fair white shrine upon the purple sea, He waits to do his solemn sacrifice To the immortal gods; and with him comes A young maid beautiful as Dawn.' Then I, Mingling despair with love, rapt in deep joy</p>
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That he was come, plunged in the  
depths of hell  
That she came too, bethought me of  
the robe  
The Centaur gave me, and the words  
he spake,  
Forgetting the deep hatred in his eyes,  
And all but love, and sent a messenger  
Bidding him wear it for the sacrifice  
To the Immortals, knowing not at all  
Whom Fate decreed the victim.

Shall my soul

Forget the agonized message which he  
sent,  
Bidding me come? For that accursèd  
robe,  
Stained with the poisonous accursèd  
blood,  
Even in the midmost flush of sacrifice  
Clung to him a devouring fire, and ate  
The piteous flesh from his dear limbs,  
and stung  
His great soft soul to madness. When  
I came,  
Knowing it was my work, he bent on  
me,  
Wise as a god through suffering and  
the near  
Inevitable Death, so that no word  
Of mine was needed, such a tender look  
Of mild reproach as smote me.  
'Couldst not thou  
Trust me, who never loved as I love  
thee?  
What need was there of magical arts to  
draw  
The love that never wavered? I have  
lived  
As he lives who through perilous paths  
must pass,  
And lifelong trials, striving to keep down  
The brute within him, born of too much  
strength

And sloth and vacuous days; by diffi-  
cult toils,  
Labours endured, and hard-fought  
fights with ill,  
Now vanquished, now triumphant;  
and sometimes,  
In intervals of too long labour, finding  
His nature grown too strong for him,  
falls prone  
Awhile a helpless prey, then once again  
Rises and spurns his chains, and fares  
anew  
Along the perilous ways. Dearest, I  
would  
That thou wert wedded to some knight  
who stayed  
At home within thy gates, and were  
content  
To see thee happy. But for me the  
fierce  
Rude energies of life, the mighty thews,  
The god sent hate of Wrong, these  
drove me forth  
To quench the thirst of battle. See,  
this maid,  
This is the bride I destined for our son  
Who grows to manhood. Do thou see  
to her  
When I am dead, for soon I know again  
The frenzy comes, and with it ceasing,  
death.  
Go, therefore, ere I harm thee when  
my strength  
Has lost its guidance. Thou wert rich  
in love,  
Be now as rich in faith. Dear, for thy  
wrong  
I do forgive thee.'

When I saw the glare  
Of madness fire his eyes, and my ears  
heard  
The groans the torture wrung from his  
great soul,

I fled with broken heart to the white  
 shrine,  
 And knelt in prayer, but still my sad  
 ear took  
 The agony of his cries.

Then I who knew  
 There was no hope in god or man for  
 me  
 Who had destroyed my Love, and with  
 him slain  
 The champion of the suffering race of  
 men,  
 And that my jealous soul, though  
 innocent  
 Of blood, was guilty of unfaith and vile  
 Mistrust, and wrapt in weakness like a  
 cloak,  
 And made the innocent tool of hate  
 and wrong,  
 Against all love and good ; grown sick  
 and filled  
 With hatred of myself, rose from my  
 knees,  
 And went a little space apart, and found  
 A gnarled tree on the cliff, and with  
 my scarf  
 Strangling myself, swung lifeless.

But in death  
 I found him not. For, building a vast  
 pile  
 Of scented woods on Oeta, as they tell,  
 My hero with his own hand lighted it,  
 And when the mighty pyre flamed far  
 and wide  
 Over all lands and seas, he climbed  
 on it  
 And laid him down to die ; but pitying  
 Zeus,  
 Before the swift flames reached him, in  
 a cloud  
 Descending, snatched the strong brave  
 soul to heaven,  
 And set him mid the stars.

Therefore am I  
 Of all the blameless shades within this  
 place

The most unhappy, if of blame, indeed,  
 I bear no load. For what is Sin itself,  
 But Error when we miss the road which  
 leads

Up to the gate of heaven? Ignorance !  
 What if we be the cause of ignorance?  
 Being blind who might have seen ! Yet  
 do I know

But self-inflicted pain, nor stain there is  
 Upon my soul such as they bear who  
 know

The dreadful scourge with which the  
 stern judge still

Lashes their sins. I am forgiven, I  
 know,

Who loved so much, and one day, if  
 Zeus will,

I shall go free from hence, and join my  
 Lord,

And be with him again."

And straight I seemed,  
 Passing, to look on some tormented life,  
 Which knows to-day the irony of Fate  
 In self-inflicted pain.

Together clung  
 The ghosts whom next I saw, bound  
 three in one

By some invisible bond. A sire, of port  
 God-like as Zeus, to whom on either  
 hand

A tender stripling clung. I knew them  
 well,

As all men know them. One fair youth  
 spake low :

"Father, it does not pain me now, to  
 be

Drawn close to thee, and by a double  
bond,  
With this my 'brother." And the  
other: "Nay;  
Nor me, O father; but I bless the chain  
Which binds our souls in union. If  
some trace  
Of pain still linger, heed it not—'tis  
past:  
Still let us cling to thee."

He with grave eyes  
Full of great tenderness, upon his sons  
Looked with the father's gaze, that is  
so far  
More sweet, and sad, and tender, than  
the gaze  
Of mothers,—now on this one, now on  
that,  
Regarding them. "Dear sons, whom  
on the earth  
I loved and cherished, it was hard to  
watch  
Your pain; but now 'tis finished, and  
we stand  
For ever, through all future days of time,  
Symbols of patient suffering undeserved,  
Endured and vanquished. Yet sad  
memory still  
Brings back our time of trial.

The young day  
Broke fair when I, the dread Poseidon's  
priest,  
Joyous because the unholy strife was  
done,  
And seeing the blue waters now left free  
Of hostile keels—save where upon the  
verge  
Far off the white sails faded—rose at  
dawn,  
And white-robed, and in garb of sacrifice,  
And with the sacred fillet round my  
brows,  
Stood at the altar; and behind, ye twain,

Decked by your mother's hand with  
new-cleansed robes,  
And with fresh flower-wreathed chaplets  
on your curls,  
Attended, and your clear young voices  
made  
Music that touched your father's eyes  
with tears,  
If not the careless gods. I seem to hear  
Those high sweet accents mounting in  
the hymn  
Which rose to all the blessed gods who  
dwelt  
Upon the far Olympus—Zeus, the Lord,  
And Sovereign Here, and the immortal  
choir  
Of Deities, but chiefly to the dread  
Poseidon, him who sways the purple  
sea  
As with a sceptre, shaking the fixed  
earth  
With stress of thundering surges. By  
the shrine  
The meek-eyed victim, for the sacrifice,  
Stood with his gilded horns. The  
hymns were done,  
And I in act to strike, when all the  
crowd  
Who knelt behind us, with a common  
fear  
Cried, with a cry that well might freeze  
the blood,  
And then, with fearful glances towards  
the sea,  
Fled, leaving us alone—me, the high  
priest,  
And ye, the acolytes; forlorn of men,  
Alone, but with our god.

But we stirred not  
We dared not fly, who in the solemn  
act  
Of worship, and the ecstasy which  
comes



To the believer's soul, saw heaven  
 revealed,

The mysteries unveiled, the inner sky  
 Which meets the enraptured gaze.

How should we fear  
 Who thus were god-encircled ! So we  
 stood

While the long ritual spent itself, nor  
 cast

An eye upon the sea. Till as I came  
 To that great act which offers up a  
 life

Before life's Lord, and the full mystery  
 Was trembling to completion, quick I  
 heard

A stifled cry of agony, and knew  
 My children's voices. And the father's  
 heart,

Which is far more than rite or service  
 done

By man for god, seeing that it is divine  
 And comes from God to men—this  
 rising in me,

Constrained me, and I ceased my prayer,  
 and turned

To succour you, and lo ! the awful  
 coils

Which crushed your lives already,  
 bound me round

And crushed me also, as you clung to  
 me,

In common death. Some god had  
 heard the prayer,

And lo ! we were ourselves the sacri-  
 fice—

The priest, the victim, the accepted  
 life,

The blood, the pain, the salutary loss.

Was it not better thus to cease and die  
 Together in one blest moment, mid the  
 flush

And ecstasy of worship, and to know

Ourselves the victims? They were  
 wrong who taught

That 'twas some jealous goddess thus  
 assailed

Our lives, revengeful for discovered  
 wiles,

Or hateful of our Troy. Not readily  
 Should such base passions sway the  
 immortal gods ;

But rather do I hold it sooth indeed  
 That Zeus himself it was, who pitying  
 The ruin he foreknew, yet might not  
 stay,

Since mightier Fate decreed it, sent in  
 haste

Those dreadful messengers, and bade  
 them take

The pious lives he loved, before the  
 din

Of midnight slaughter woke, and the  
 fair town

Flamed pitifully to the skies, and all  
 Was blood and ruin. Surely it was  
 best

To die as we did, and in death to live,  
 A vision for all ages of high pain

Which passes into beauty, and is  
 merged

In one accordant whole, as discords  
 merge

In that great Harmony which ceaseless  
 rings

From the tense chords of life, than to  
 have lived

Our separate lives, and died our separate  
 deaths,

And left no greater mark than drops  
 which rain

Upon the unwrinkled sea. Those hosts  
 which fell

Before the Scæan gate upon the sand,  
 Nor found a bard to sing their fate, but  
 left

Their bones to dogs and kites—were  
     they more blest  
 Than we who, in the people's sight  
     before  
 Ilium's unshattered towers, lay down  
     to die  
 Our swift miraculous death? Dear  
     sons, and good,  
 Dear children of my love, now doubly  
     dear  
 For this our common sorrow ; suffer-  
     ing binds  
 Not gyves of pain alone, but fashions  
     for us  
 A chain of purest gold, which though  
     withdrawn  
 Or felt no longer, knits 'tween soul and  
     soul,  
 Indissoluble bonds, and draws our  
     lives  
 So close, that though the individual life  
 Be merged, there springs a common  
     life which grows  
 To such dread beauty, as has power to  
     take  
 The sting from sorrow, and transform  
     the pain  
 Into transcendent joy : as from the  
     storm  
 The unearthly rainbow draws its  
     myriad hues  
 And steeps the world in fairness. All  
     our lives  
 Are notes that fade and sink, and so  
     are merged  
 In the full harmony of Being. Dear  
     sons,  
 Cling closer to me. Life nor Death  
     has torn  
 Our lives asunder, as for some, but  
     drawn  
 Their separate strands together in a  
     knot

Closer than Life itself, stronger than  
     Death,  
 Insoluble as Fate."

    Then they three clung  
 Together—the strong father and young  
     sons,  
 And in their loving eyes I saw the  
     Pain  
 Fade into Joy, Suffering in Beauty lost,  
 And Death in Love !

    By a still sullen pool,  
 Into its dark depths gazing, lay the  
     ghost  
 Whom next I passed. In form, a  
     comely youth,  
 Scarce passed from boyhood. Golden  
     curls were his,  
 And wide blue eyes. The semblance  
     of a smile  
 Came on his lip—a girl's but for the  
     down  
 Which hardly shaded it ; but the pale  
     check  
 Was soft as any maiden's, and his robe  
 Was virginal, and at his breast he bore  
 The perfumed amber cup which, when  
     March comes,  
 Gems the dry woods and windy wolds,  
     and speaks  
 The resurrection.

    Looking up, he said :  
 " Methought I saw her then, my love,  
     my fair,  
 My beauty, my ideal ; the dim clouds  
 Lifted, methought, a little—or was it  
 Fond Fancy only ? For I know that  
     here  
 No sunbeam cleaves the twilight, but  
     a mist

Creeps over all the sky and fields and  
pools,  
And blots them ; and I know I seek in  
vain  
My earth-sought beauty, nor can Fancy  
bring  
An answer to my thought from these  
blind depths  
And unawakened skies. Yet has use  
made  
The quest so precious, that I keep it  
here,  
Well knowing it is vain.

On the old earth  
'Twas otherwise, when in fair Thes-  
saly  
I walked regardless of all nymphs who  
sought  
My love, but sought in vain, whether  
it were  
Dryad or Naiad from the woods or  
streams,  
Or white-robed Oread fleeting on the  
side  
Of fair Olympus, echoing back my  
sighs,  
In vain, for through the mountains day  
by day  
I wandered, and along the foaming  
brooks,  
And by the pine-woods dry, and never  
took  
A thought for love, nor ever 'mid the  
throng  
Of loving nymphs who knew me beau-  
tiful  
I dallied, unregarding ; till they said  
Some died for love of me, who loved  
not one.  
And yet I cared not, wandering still  
alone  
Amid the mountains by the scented  
pines.

Till one fair day, when all the hills  
were still,  
Nor any breeze made murmur through  
the boughs,  
Nor cloud was on the heavens, I  
wandered slow,  
Leaving the nymphs who fain with  
dance and song  
Had kept me 'midst the glades, and  
strayed away  
Among the pines, enwapt in fantasy,  
And by the beechen dells which clothe  
the feet

Of fair Olympus, wrapt in fantasy,  
Weaving the thin and unembodied  
shapes  
Which Fancy loves to body forth, and  
leave  
In marble or in song ; and so strayed  
down  
To a low sheltered vale above the  
plains,  
Where the lush grass grew thick, and  
the stream stayed  
Its garrulous tongue ; and last upon  
the bank  
Of a still pool I came, where was no  
flow  
Of water, but the depths were clear as  
air,  
And nothing but the silvery gleaming  
side  
Of tiny fishes stirred. There lay I  
down  
Upon the flowery bank, and scanned  
the deep,  
Half in a waking dream.

Then swift there rose,  
From those enchanted depths, a face  
more fair  
Than ever I had dreamt of, and I knew  
My sweet long-sought ideal : the thick  
curls,

Like these, were golden, and the white robe showed	Rose, a blue vault above us, and no shade
Like this ; but for the wondrous eyes and lips,	Of earthly thing obscured us, as we lay
The tender loving glance, the sunny smile	Two reflex souls, one and yet different,
Upon the rosy mouth, these knew I not,	Two sundered souls longing to be at one.
Not even in dreams ; and yet I seemed to trace	There, all day long, until the light was gone
Myself within them too, as who should find	And took my love away, I lay and loved
His former self expunged, and him transformed	The image, and when night was come, 'Farewell,'
To some high thin ideal, separate	I whispered, and she whispered back, 'Farewell,'
From what he was, by some invisible bar,	With oh, such yearning ! Many a day we spent
And yet the same in difference. As I moved	By that clear pool together all day long.
My arms to clasp her to me, lo ! she moved	And many a clouded hour on the wet grass
Her eager arms to mine, smiled to my smile,	I lay beneath the rain, and saw her not,
Looked love to love, and answered longing eyes	And sickened for her ; and sometimes the pool
With longing. When my full heart burst in words,	Was thick with flood, and hid her ; and sometimes
'Dearest, I love thee,' lo ! the lovely lips,	Some cold wind ruffled those clear wells, and left
'Dearest, I love thee,' sighed, and through the air	But glimpses of her, and I rose at eve Unsatisfied, a cold chill in my limbs
The love-lorn echo rang. But when I longed	And fever at my heart : until, too soon ! The summer faded, and the skies were hid,
To answer kiss with kiss, and stooped my lips	And my love came not, but a quench- less thirst
To her sweet lips in that long thrill which strains	Wasted my life. And all the winter long
Soul unto soul, the cold lymph came between	The bright sun shone not, or the thick ribbed ice
And chilled our love, and kept us separate souls	Obscured her, and I pined for her, and knew
Which fain would mingle, and the self- same heaven	My life ebb from me, till I grew too weak

<p>To seek her, fearing I should see no more My dear. And so the long dead winter waned And the slow spring came back. And one blithe day, When life was in the woods, and the birds sang, And soft airs fanned the hills, I knew again Some gleam of hope within me, and again With feeble limbs crawled forth, and felt the spring Blossom within me; and the flower- starred glades, The bursting trees, the building nests, the songs, The hurry of life revived me; and I crept, Ghost like, amid the joy, until I flung My panting frame, and weary nerveless limbs, Down by the cold still pool. And lo! I saw My love once more, not beauteous as of old, But oh, how changed! the fair young cheek grown pale, The great eyes, larger than of yore, gaze forth With a sad yearning look; and a great pain And pity took me which were more than love, And with a loud and wailing voice I cried, 'Dearest, I come again. I pine for thee,' And swift she answered back, 'I pine for thee;' 'Come to me, oh, my own,' I cried, and she--</p>	<p>Come to me, oh, my own. Then with a cry Of love I joined myself to her, and plunged Beneath the icy surface with a kiss, And fainted, and am here. And now, indeed, I know not if it was myself I sought, As some tell, or another. For I hold That what we seek is but our other self, Other and higher, neither wholly like Nor wholly different, the half-life the gods Retained when half was given—one the man And one the woman; and I longed to round The imperfect essence by its comple- ment, For only thus the perfect life stands forth Whole, self-sufficing. Worse it is to live Ill-mated than imperfect, and to move From a false centre, not a perfect sphere, But with a crooked bias sent oblique Athwart life's furrows. 'Twas myself, indeed, Thus only that I sought, that lovers use To see in that they love, not that which is, But that their fancy feigns, and view themselves Reflected in their love, yet glorified, And finer and more pure. Wherefore it is: All love which finds its own ideal mate Is happy—happy that which gives itself Unto itself, and keeps, through long calm years, The tranquil image in its eyes, and knows</p>
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Fulfilment and is blest, and day by day	For in those tender flowers is hid the life
Wears love like a white flower, nor holds it less	That once was mine. All things are bound in one
Though sharp winds bite, or hot suns fade, or age	In earth and heaven,—nor is there any gulf
Sully its perfect whiteness, but inhales Its fragrance, and is glad. But happier still	'Twixt things that live,—the flower that was a life,
He who long seeks a high goal un-attained,	The life that is a flower,—but one sure chain
And wearies for it all his days, nor knows	Binds all, as now I know.
Possession sate his thirst, but still pursues	If there are still
The fleeting loveliness—now seen, now lost,	Fair Oreads on the hills, say to them, sir,
But evermore grown fairer, till at last	They must no longer pine for me, but find
He stretches forth his arms and takes the fair	Some worthier lover, who can love again ;
In one long rapture, and its name is Death."	For I have found my love."
	And to the pool
	He turned, and gazed with dreaming eyes, and showed
	Fair as an angel.
Thus he ; and seeing me stand grave : " Farewell.	
If ever thou shouldst happen on a wood	Leaving him enwrapd
In Thessaly, upon the plain-ward spurs	In musings, to a gloomy pass I came
Of fair Olympus, take the path which winds	Between dark rocks, where scarce a gleam of light,
Through the close vale, and thou shalt see the pool	Not even the niggard light of that dim land,
Where once I found my life. And if in Spring	Might enter ; and the soil was black and bare,
Thou go there, round the margin thou shalt know	Nor even the thin growths which scarcely clothed
These amber blooms bend meekly, smiling down	The higher fields might live. Hard by a cave
Upon the crystal surface. Pluck them not.	Which sloped down steeply to the lowest depths,
But kneel a little while, and breathe a prayer	Whence dreadful sounds ascended, seated still,
'To the fair god of Love, and let them be.	

Her head upon her hands, I saw a  
     maid  
 With eyes fixed on the ground—not  
     Tartarus  
 It was, but Hades ; and she knew no  
     pain,  
 Except her painful thought. Yet there  
     it seemed,  
 As here, the unequal measure which  
     awaits  
 The adjustment, and meanwhile, in-  
     spires the strife  
 Which rears life's palace walls ; and  
     fills the sail  
 Which bears our bark across unfathomed  
     seas,  
 To its last harbour ; this prevailed  
     there too,  
 And 'twas a luckless shade which sat  
     and wept  
 Amid the gloom, though blameless.  
     Suddenly,  
 She raised her head, and lo ! the long  
     curls, writhed,  
 Tangled, and snake-like—as the drip-  
     ping hair  
 Of a dead girl who freed from life and  
     shame,  
 From out the cruel wintry flow, is  
     laid  
 Stark on the snow with dreadful staring  
     eyes  
 Like hers. For when she raised her  
     eyes to mine,  
 They chilled my blood, so great a woe  
     they bore ;  
 And as she gazed, wide-eyed, I knew  
     my pulse  
 Beat slow, and my limbs stiffen. Then  
     they wore,  
 At length, a softer look, and life revived  
 Within my breast as thus she so'tly  
     spoke :

"Nay, friend, I would not harm  
     thee. I have known  
 Great sorrow, and sometimes it racks  
     me still,  
 And turns me into stone, and makes  
     my eyes  
 As dreadful as of yore ; and yet it  
     comes  
 But seldom, as thou sawest, now, for  
     Time  
 And Death have healing hands. Only  
     I love  
 To sit within the darkness here, nor  
     face  
 The throng of happier ghosts ; if any  
     ghost  
 Of happiness come here. For on the  
     earth  
 They wronged me bitterly, and turned  
     to stone  
 My heart, till scarce I knew if e'er I was  
 The happy girl of yore.  
     That youth who dreams  
 Up yonder by the margin of the lake,  
 Knew but a cold ideal love, but me  
 Love in unearthly guise, but bodily  
     form,  
 Seized and betrayed.  
     I was a priestess once,  
 Of stern Athené, doing day by day  
 Due worship ; raising, every dawn that  
     came,  
 My cold pure hymns to take her virgin  
     ear ;  
 Nor sporting with the joyous company  
 Of youths and maids, who at the neigh-  
     bouring shrine  
 Of Aphrodité served. Nor dance nor  
     song  
 Allured me, nor the pleasant days of  
     youth  
 And twilights 'mid the vines. They  
     held me cold

Who were my friends in childhood.  
 For my soul  
 Was virginal, and at the virgin shrine  
 I knelt, athirst for knowledge. Day by  
 day  
 The long cold ritual sped, the liturgies  
 Were done, the barren hymns of praise  
 went up  
 Before the goddess, and the ecstasy  
 Offaith possessed me wholly, till almost  
 I knew not I was woman. Yet I knew  
 That I was fair to see, and fit to share  
 Some natural honest love, and bear the  
 load  
 Of children like the rest ; only my soul  
 Was lost in higher yearnings.  
 Like a god,  
 He burst upon those pallid lifeless days,  
 Bringing fresh airs and salt, as from  
 the sea,  
 And wrecked my life. How should a  
 virgin know  
 Deceit, who never at the joyous shrine  
 Of Cypris knelt, but ever lived apart,  
 And so grew guilty? For if I had  
 spent  
 My days among the throng, either my  
 fault  
 Were blameless, or undone. For  
 innocence  
 The tempter spreads his net. For  
 innocence  
 The gods keep all their terrors. Inno-  
 cence  
 It is that bears the burden, which for  
 guilt  
 Is lightened, and the spoiler goes his  
 way,  
 Uncaring, joyous, leaving her alone,  
 The victim and unfriended.  
 Was it just  
 In her, my mistress, who had had my  
 youth,

To wreak such vengeance on me? I  
 had erred,  
 It may be ; but on him, whose was the  
 guilt,  
 No heaven-sent vengeance lighted, but  
 he sped  
 Away to other hearts across the deep,  
 Careless and free ; but me, the cold  
 stern eyes  
 Of the pure goddess withered ; and the  
 scorn  
 Of maids, despised before, and the  
 great blank  
 Of love, this wrung my heart, whose  
 love was gone,  
 And froze my blood ; set on my brow  
 despair,  
 And turned my gaze to stone, and filled  
 my eyes  
 With horror, and stiffened the soft  
 curls which once  
 Lay smooth and fair into such snake-  
 like rings  
 As made my aspect fearful. All who  
 saw,  
 Shrank from me and grew cold, and  
 felt the warm,  
 Full tide of life freeze in them, seeing  
 in me  
 Love's work, who sat wrapt up and  
 lost in shame,  
 As in a cloak, consuming my own heart,  
 And was in hell already. As they gazed  
 Upon me, my despair looked forth so  
 cold  
 From out my eyes, that if some spoiler  
 came  
 Fresh from his wickedness, and looked  
 on them,  
 Their glare would strike him dead ; and  
 those fair curls  
 Which once the accursed toyed with,  
 grew to be



The poisonous things thou seest ; and  
 so, with hate  
 Of man's injustice and the gods', who  
 knew  
 Me blameless, and yet punished me ;  
 and sick  
 Of life and love, and loathing earth  
 and sky,  
 And feeding on my sorrow, Hate at last  
 Left me a Fury.

Ah, the load of life  
 Which lives for hatred ! We are made  
 to love—

We women, and the injury which turns  
 The honey of our lives to gall, trans-  
 forms

The angel to the fiend. For it is  
 sweet

To know the dreadful sense of strength,  
 and smite

And leave the tyrant dead with a  
 glance ; ay ! sweet,

In that fierce lust of power, to slay the  
 life

Which harmed not, when the sup-  
 pliants' cry ascends

To ears which hate has deafened. So  
 I lived

Long time in misery ; to my sleepless  
 eyes

No healing slumbers coming ; but at  
 length,

Zeus and the goddess pitying, I knew  
 Soft rest once more veiling my dreadful  
 gaze

In peaceful slumbers. Then a blessed  
 dream

I dreamt. For, lo ! a god-like knight  
 in mail

Of gold, who sheared with his keen  
 flashing blade ;

With scarce a pang of pain, the visage  
 gold

Which too great sorrow left me ; at one  
 stroke

Clean from the trunk, and then o'er  
 land and sea,

Invisible, sped with winged heels, to  
 where,

Upon a sea worn cape, a fair young  
 maid,

More blameless even than I was,  
 chained and bound,

Waited a monster from the deep and  
 stood

In innocent nakedness. Then, as he  
 rose,

Loathsome, from out the depths, a  
 monstrous growth,

A creature wholly serpent, partly man,  
 The wrongs that I had known, stronger  
 than death,

Rose up with such black hate in me  
 again,

And wreathed such hissing poison  
 through my hair,

And shot such deadly glances from my  
 eyes,

That nought that saw might live. And  
 the vile worm

Was slain, and she delivered. Then I  
 dreamt

My mistress, whom I thought so stern  
 to me,

Athené, set those dreadful staring eyes,  
 And that despairing visage, on her shield

Of chastity, and bears it evermore  
 To fright the waverer from the wrong

he would,  
 And strike the unrepenting spoiler,

dead."

Then for a little paused she, while I  
 saw

Again her eyes grow dreadful, till  
 once more,

<p>And with a softer glance :              " From that blest dream          I woke not on the earth, but only here.          And now my pain is lightened since I              know          My dream, which was a dream within              the dream          Which is our life, fulfilled. And I have              saved          Another through my suffering, and              through her          A people. Oh, strange chain of sacri-              fice,          That binds an innocent life, and from              its blood          And sorrow works out joy! Oh,              mystery          Of pain and evil! wrong grown salu-              tary,          And mighty to redeem! If thou              shouldst see          A woman on the earth, who pays to-              day          Like penalty of sin, and the new gods          (For after Saturn, Zeus ruled; after              him          It may be there are others) love to take          The tender heart of girlhood, and to              immure          Within a cold and cloistered cell the              life          Which nature meant to bless, and if              Love come          Hold her accursed; or to some poor              maid,          Forlorn and trusting, still the tempter              comes          And works his wrong, and leaves her              in despair          And shame and all abhorrence, while              he goes          His way unpunished,—if thou know              her eyes</p>	<p>Freeze thee like mine—oh! bid her              lose her pain          In succouring others—say to her that              Time          And Death have healing hands, and              here there comes          To the forgiven transgressor only pain          Enough to chasten joy!"              And a soft tear          Trembled within her eyes, and her              sweet gaze          Was as the Magdalen's, the horror              gone          And a great radiance come.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Then as I passed</p> <p>To upper air, I saw two figures rise          Together, one a woman with a grave          Fair face not all unhappy, and the              robes          And presence of a queen; and with              her walked          The fairest youth that ever maiden's              dream          Conceived. And as they came, the              throng of ghosts,          For these who were not wholly ghosts,              arose,          And did them homage. Not the bond              of love          Bound them, but such calm kinship as              is bred          Of long and difficult pilgrimages borne          Through common perils by two souls              which share          A common weary exile. Nor as ghosts          These showed, but rather like two lives              which hung          Suspended in a trance. A halo of              life</p>
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Played round them, and they brought  
     a sweet brisk air  
 Tasting of earth and heaven, like  
     sojourners  
 Who stayed but for awhile, and knew  
     a swift  
 Release await them. First the youth  
     it was  
 Who spake thus as they passed :  
     "Dread Queen, once more  
 I feel life stir within me, and my blood  
 Run faster, while a new strange cycle  
     turns  
 And grows completed. Soon on the  
     dear earth,  
 Under the lively light of fuller day,  
 I shall revive me of my wound ; and  
     thou,  
 Passing with me yon cold and lifeless  
     stream,  
 And the grim monster who will fawn  
     on thee,  
 Shalt issue in royal pomp, and wreathed  
     with flowers,  
 Upon the cheerful earth, leaving behind  
 A deeper winter for the ghosts who  
     dwell  
 Within these sunless haunts ; and I  
     shall lie  
 Once more within loved arms, and thou  
     shalt see  
 Thy early home, and kiss thy mother's  
     check,  
 And be a girl again. But not for long ;  
 For ere the bounteous Autumn spreads  
     her hues  
 Of gold and purple, a cold voice will  
     call  
 And bring us to these wintry lands once  
     more,  
 As erst so often. Blest are we, indeed,  
 Above the rest, and yet I would I knew  
 The careless joys of old.

    For in hot youth,  
 Oh, it was sweet to greet the balmy  
     night  
 That was love's nurse, and feel the  
     weary eyes  
 Closed by soft kisses,—sweet at early  
     dawn  
 To wake refreshed and, scarce from  
     loving arms  
 'Scaping, to ride afield, with winding  
     horn,  
 By dewy heath and brake, and taste  
     the fair  
 Young breath of early morning ; and  
     'twas sweet  
 To chase the bounding quarry all day  
     long  
 With my good hounds and trusty steed,  
     and gay  
 Young comrades of my youth, and with  
     the eve  
 To turn home laden with the spoil, and  
     take  
 The banquet which awaited, and sweet  
     wine  
 Poured out, and kisses pressed on  
     loving lips ;  
 Circled by snowy arms. Oh, it was  
     sweet  
 To be alive and young !

    For sure it is  
 The gods gave not quick pulses and  
     hot blood  
 And strength and beauty for no end,  
     but would  
 That we should use them wisely ; and  
     the fair,  
 Sweet mistress of my service was,  
     indeed,  
 Worthy of all observance. Oh, her  
     eyes  
 When I lay bleeding ! All day long  
     we rode,

<p>             I and my youthful peers, with horse                  and hound,              And knew the joy of swift pursuit and                  toil              And peril. At the last, a fierce boar                  turned              At bay, and with his gleaming tusks                  o'erthrew              My steed, and as I fell upon the                  flowers,              Pierced me as with a sword. Then,                  as I lay,              I knew the strange slow chill which,                  stealing, tells              The young that it is death. Yet knew                  I not              Or pain or fear, only great pity, indeed,              That she should lose her love, who was                  so fond              And gracious. But when, lifting my                  dim gaze,              I saw her bend o'er me,—the lovely                  eyes              Suffused with tears, and her sweet                  smile replaced              By sweeter sorrow,—for a while I                  stayed              Life's ebbing tide, and raised my cold,                  white lips,              With a faint smile, to hers. Then,                  with a kiss—              One long last kiss, we mingled, and I                  knew              No more,                  But even in death, so strong is Love,              I could not wholly die ; and year by                  year,              When the flowered Spring returns, and                  the earth lives,              Love opens these dread gates, and calls                  me forth              Across the gulf. Not here, indeed, she                  comes,           </p>	<p>             Being a goddess and in heaven, but                  smooths              My path to the old earth, where still I                  know              Once more the dear lost days, and once                  again              Blossom on that soft breast, and am                  again              A youth, and rapt in love ; and yet                  not all              As careless as of yore : but seem to                  know              The early spring of passion, tamed by                  time              And suffering, to a calmer, fuller flow,              Less fitful, but more strong."           </p> <p style="text-align: right;">Then the sad Queen :</p> <p>             " Fair youth, thy lot I know, for I am                  old              As the old earth and yet as young                  as is              The budding spring, and I was here a                  Queen,              When Love was not or Time, and to                  my arms              Thou camest as a little child, to dwell              Within the halls of Death, for without                  Death              There were nor Birth nor Love, nor                  would Life yearn              To lose itself within another life,              And dying, to be born. I, too, have                  died              For love in part, and live again through                  love ;              For in the far-off years, when Time                  was young,              And Love unborn on earth, and Zeus                  in heaven              Ruled, a young sovereign ; I, a maiden,                  dwelt              With loved Demeter on the sunny                  plains           </p>
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Of our own Sicily. There, day by day,  
 I sported with my playmate goddesses,  
 In virgin freedom. Budding age made  
     gay  
 Our lightsome feet, and on the flowery  
     slopes  
 We wandered daily, gathering flowers  
     to weave  
 In careless garlands for our locks, and  
     passed  
 The days in innocent gladness. Thought  
     of Love  
 There came not to us, for as yet the  
     earth  
 Was virginal, nor yet had Eros come  
 With his delicious pain.

                    And one fair morn—  
 Not all the ages blot it—on the side  
 Of Ætna we were straying. There was  
     then  
 Summer nor winter, springtide nor the  
     time  
 Of harvest, but the soft unfailing sun  
 Shone always, and the sowing time was  
     one  
 With reaping ; fruit and flower together  
     glowed  
 Upon the trees ; and blade and ripened  
     ear  
 Together clothed the plains. There,  
     as I strayed,  
 Sudden a black cloud down the rugged  
     side  
 Of Ætna, mixed with fire and dreadful  
     sound  
 Of thunder, rolled around me, and I  
     heard  
 The maids who were my fellows turn  
     and flee  
 With shrieks and cries for me.

                    But I, I knew  
 No terror while the god o'ershadowed  
     me,

Hiding my life in his, nor when I wept,  
 My flowers all withered, and my blood  
     ran slow

Within a wintry land. Some voice  
     there was

Which said, ' Fear not. Thou shalt  
     return and see

Thy mother again, only a little while  
 Fate wills that thou shouldst tarry, and  
     become

Queen of another world. Thou seest  
     that all

Thy flowers are faded. They shall live  
     again

On earth, as thou shalt, as thou livest  
     now

The Life of Death—for what is Death  
     but Life

Suspended as in sleep? The primal  
     rule

Where life was constant, and the sun  
     o'erhead,

Blazed forth unchanging, changes and  
     is hidden

Awhile. This region which thou seest,  
     where all

The trees are lifeless, and the flowers  
     are dead,

Is but the self-same earth on which  
     erewhile

Thou sportedst fancy free.'

                    So, without fear  
 I wandered on this bare land, seeing far  
 Upon the sky the peaks of my own hills  
 And crests of my own woods. Till,  
     when I grew

Hungered, ere yet another form I saw ;  
 Along the silent alleys journeying,  
 And leafless groves ; a fair and mystic  
     tree

Rose like a heart in shape, and 'mid its  
     leaves

One golden mystic fruit with a fair seed

Hid in it. This, with childish hand, I  
took  
And ate, and straight I knew the tree  
was Life,  
And the fruit Death, and the hid seed  
was Love.

Al, sweet strange fruit! the which  
if any taste  
They may no longer keep their lives of  
old  
Or their own selves unchanged, but  
some weird change  
And subtle alchemy comes which can  
transmute  
The blood, and mould the spirits of  
gods and men  
In some new magical form. Not as  
before,  
Our life comes to us, though the passion  
cools,  
Nay, never as before. My mother  
came  
Too late to seek me. She had power  
to raise  
A life from out Death's grasp, but from  
the arms  
Of Love she might not take me, nor  
undo  
Love's past for all her strength. She  
came and sought  
With fires her daughter over land and  
sea,  
Beyond the paths of all the setting stars,  
In vain, and over all the earth in vain,  
Seeking whom love disguised. Then  
on all lands  
She cast the spell of barrenness; the  
wheat  
Was blighted in the ear, the purple  
grapes  
Blashed no more on the vines, and all  
the gods

Were sorrowful, seeing the load of ill  
My rape had laid on men. Last, Zeus  
himself,  
Pitying the evil that was done, sent forth  
His messenger beyond the western rim  
To fetch me back to earth.

But not the same  
He found me who had eaten of Love's  
seed,  
But changed into another; nor could  
his power  
Prevail to keep me wholly on the earth,  
Or make me maid again. The wintry  
life  
Is homelier often than the summer blaze  
Of happiness unclouded; so, when  
Spring  
Comes on the world, I, coming, cross  
with thee,  
Year after year, the cruel icy stream;  
And leave this anxious sceptre and the  
shades  
Of those in hell, or those for whom,  
though blest,  
No Spring comes, till the last great  
Spring which brings  
New heavens and new earth; and lay  
my head  
Upon my mother's bosom, and grow  
young,  
And am a girl again.

A soft air breathes  
Across the stream and fills these barren  
fields  
With the sweet odours of the earth. I  
know  
Again the perfume of the violets  
Which bloom on Aetna's side. Soon  
we shall pass  
Together to our home, while round our  
feet  
The crocus flames like gold, the wind-  
flowers white

Wave their soft petals on the breeze,  
 and all  
 The choir of flowers lift up their silent  
 song  
 To the unclouded heavens. Thou, fair  
 boy,  
 Shalt lie within thy love's white arms  
 again,  
 And I within my mother's. Sweet is Love  
 In ceasing and renewal ; nay, in these  
 It lives and has its being. Thou couldst  
 not keep  
 Thy youth as now, if always on the  
 breast  
 Of love too late a lingerer thou hadst  
 known  
 Possession sate thee. Nor might I have  
 kept  
 My mother's heart, if I had lived to ripe  
 And wither on the stalk. Time calls  
 and Change  
 Commands both men and gods, and  
 speeds us on  
 We know not whither ; but the old  
 earth smiles  
 Spring after Spring, and the seed bursts  
 again  
 Out of its prison mould, and the dead  
 lives  
 Renew themselves, and rise aloft and  
 soar  
 And are transformed, clothing them-  
 selves with change  
 Till the last change be done."

As thus she spake,  
 I saw a gleam of light flash from the eyes  
 Of all the listening shades, and a great  
 joy  
 Thrill through the realms of Death.

And then again  
 A youthful shade I saw, a comely boy,  
 With lip and cheek just touched with  
 manly down,  
 And strong limbs wearing Spring ; in  
 mien and garb  
 A youthful chieftain, with a perfect face  
 Of fresh young beauty, clustered curls  
 divine,  
 And chiselled features like a sculptured  
 god,  
 But warm and breathing life ; only the  
 eyes,  
 The fair large eyes, were full of dream-  
 ing thought,  
 And seemed to gaze beyond the world  
 of sight,  
 On a hid world of beauty. Him I  
 stayed,  
 Accosting with soft words of courtesy ;  
 And, on a bank of scentless flowers  
 reclined,  
 He answered thus :

" Not for the garish sun  
 I long, nor for the splendours of high  
 noon  
 In this dim land I languish : for of  
 yore  
 Full often, when the swift chase swept  
 along  
 Through the brisk morn, or when my  
 comrades called  
 To wrestling, or the foot-race, or to  
 cleave  
 The sunny stream, I loved to walk  
 apart,  
 Self-centred, sole ; and when the  
 laughing girls  
 To some fair stripling's oaten melody  
 Made ready for the dance, I heeded  
 not ;  
 Nor when to the loud trumpet's blast  
 and blare





<p>             I sought my mistress through the leafless                  groves,              And slumbered and was happy, till the                  dawn              Returning found me stretched out, cold                  and stark,              With life's fire nigh burnt out. Till                  one clear night,              When the birds shivered in the pines,                  and all              The inner heavens stood open, lo ! she                  came,              Brighter and kinder still, and kissed                  my eyes              And half-closed lips, and drew my soul                  through them,              And in one precious ecstasy dissolved              My life. And thenceforth, ever on the                  hill              I lie unseen of man ; a cold, white form,              Still young, through all the ages ; but                  my soul,              Wearing this thin presentment of old                  days,              Walks this dim land, where never                  moonrise comes,              Nor day-break, but a twilight waiting-                  time,              No more ; and, ah ! how weary ! Yet                  I judge              My lot a higher far than his who spends              His youth on swift hot pleasure, quickly                  past ;              Or theirs, my equals', who through long                  calm years              Grew sleek in dull content of wedded                  lives              And fair-grown offspring. Many a day                  for them,              While I was wandering here, and my                  bones bleached              Upon the rocks, the sweet autumnal                  sun           </p>	<p>             Beamed, and the grapes grew purple.                  Many a day              They heaped up gold, they knelt at                  festivals,              They waxed in high report and fame of                  men,              They gave their girls in marriage ; while                  for me              Upon the untrodden peaks, the cold,                  grey morn,              The snows, the rains, the winds, the                  untempered blaze,              Beat year by year, until I turned to                  stone,              And the great eagles shrieked at me,                  and wheeled              Affrighted. Yet I judge it better                  indeed              To seek in life, as now I know I sought,              Some fair impossible Love, which slays                  our life,              Some fair ideal raised too high for man ;              And failing to grow mad, and cease to                  be,              Than to decline, as they do who have                  found              Broad-paunched content and weal and                  happiness :              And so an end. For one day, as I                  know,              The high aim unfulfilled fulfils itself ;              The deep, unsatisfied thirst is satisfied ;              And through this twilight, broken                  suddenly,              The inmost heaven, the lucent stars of                  God,              The Moon of Love, the Sun of Life ;                  and I,              I who pine here—I on the Latmian hill              Shall soar aloft and find them."                  With the word,              There beamed a shaft of dawn athwart                  the skies,           </p>
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And straight the sentinel thrush within  
the yew  
Sang out reveillé to the hosts of day,  
Soldierly ; and the pomp and rush of life  
Began once more, and left me there  
alone  
Amid the awaking world.

Nay, not alone.

One fair shade lingered in the fuller day,  
The last to come, when now my dream  
had grown  
Half mixed with waking thoughts, as  
grows a dream  
In summer mornings when the broader  
light  
Dazzles the sleeper's eyes ; and is most  
fair  
Of all and best remembered, and  
becomes  
Part of our waking life, when older  
dreams  
Grow fainter, and are fled. So this  
remained  
The fairest of the visions that I knew,  
Most precious and most dear.

The increasing light

Shone through her, finer than the  
thinnest shade,  
And yet most full of beauty ; golden  
wings,  
From her fair shoulders springing,  
seemed to raise  
Her stainless feet from the gross earth  
and lift  
Their wearer into air ; and in her eyes  
Was such fair glance as comes from  
virgin love,  
Long chastened and triumphant.  
Every soil

Of life had vanished from her, and  
she showed  
As one who walks a saint already on  
earth,  
Virgin or mother. Immortality  
Breathed from those radiant eyes which  
yet had passed  
Between the gates of death. I seemed  
to hear  
The Soul of mortals speaking :

" I was born

Of a great race and mighty, and was  
grown  
Fair, as they said, and good, and kept  
a life  
Pure from all stain of passion. Love  
I knew not,  
Who was absorbed in duty ; and the  
Queen  
Of gods and men, seeing my life more  
calm  
Than human, hating my impassive heart,  
Sent down her perfect son in wrath to  
earth,  
And bade him break me.

But when Eros came,

It did repent him of the task, for Love  
Is kin to Duty. "

And within my life

I knew miraculous change, and a soft  
flame  
Wherefrom the snows of Duty flushed  
to rose,  
And the chill icy depths of mind were  
stirred  
By a warm tide of passion. Long I  
lived  
Not knowing what had been, nor re-  
cognized  
A Presence walking with me through  
my life,  
As if by night, his face and form con-  
cealed :

A gracious voice alone, which none  
but I  
Might hear, sustained me, and its name  
was Love.

Not as the earthly loves which throb  
and flush  
Round earthly shrines was mine, but  
a pure spirit,  
Lovelier than all embodied love, more  
pure  
And wonderful ; but never on his eyes  
I looked, which still were hidden, and  
I knew not  
The fashion of his nature ; for by night,  
When visual eyes are blind, but the  
soul sees,  
Came he, and bade me think not to  
make search  
Or whence he came or wherefore.  
Nor knew I  
His name. And always ere the coming  
day,  
As if he were the Sun-god, lingering  
With some too well-loved maiden, he  
would rise  
And vanish until eve. But all my being  
Thrilled with my fair unearthly visitant  
To higher duty and more glorious meed  
Of action than of old, for it was Love  
That came to me, who might not know  
his name.

Thus, ever rapt by dreams divine,  
I knew  
The scorn that comes from weaker  
souls, which miss,  
Being too low of nature, the great joy  
Revealed to others higher ; nay, my  
sisters,  
Who being of one blood with me, made  
choice  
To tread the flowery ways of daily life,

Grew jealous of me, bidding me take  
heed  
Lest haply 'twas some monstrous fiend  
I loved,  
Such as in fable oft-times sought and won  
The innocent hearts of maids. Long  
time I held  
My love too dear for doubt, who was  
so sweet  
And lovable. But at the last the sneers,  
The mystery which hid him, the swift  
flight  
Before the coming dawn, the shape  
concealed,  
The curious girlish heart, these worked  
on me  
With an unsatisfied thirst. Not his  
own words :  
' Dear, I am with thee only while I keep  
My visage hidden ; and if thou once  
shouldst see  
My face, I must forsake thee : the  
high gods  
Link Love with Faith, and he with-  
draws himself  
From the full gaze of Knowledge'—  
not even these  
Could cure me of my longing, or the fear  
Those mocking voices worked : who  
fain would learn  
The worst that might befall.

And one sad night,  
Just ere the day leapt from the hills  
and brought  
The hour when he should go : with  
tremulous hands,  
Lighting my midnight lamp in fear, I  
stood  
Long time uncertain, and at length  
turned round  
And gazed upon my love. He lay asleep,  
And oh, how fair he was ! The flicker-  
ing light

Fell on the fairest of the gods, stretched  
out  
In happy slumber. Looking on his  
locks  
Of gold, and faultless face and smile,  
and limbs  
Made perfect, a great joy and trembling  
took me  
Who was most blest of women, and in  
awe  
And fear I stooped to kiss him. One  
warm drop—  
From the full lamp within my trembling  
hand,  
Or a glad tear from my too happy eyes,  
Fell on his shoulder.

Then the god unclosed  
His lovely eyes, and with great pity  
spake :  
'Farewell! There is no Love except  
with Faith,  
And thine is dead! Farewell! I  
come no more.'  
And straightway from the hills the full  
red sun  
Leapt up, and as I clasped my love  
again,  
The lovely vision faded from his place,  
And came no more.

Then I, with breaking heart,  
Knowing my life laid waste by my own  
hand,  
Went forth and would have sought to  
hide my life  
Within the stream of Death; but Death  
came not  
To aid me who not yet was meet for  
Death.

Then finding that Love came not  
back to me,  
I thought that in the temples of the gods  
Haply he dwelt, and so from fane to fane

I wandered over earth, and knelt in each,  
Enquiring for my Love; and I would ask  
The priests and worshippers, 'Is this  
Love's shrine?

Sirs, have you seen the god?' But  
never at all

I found him. For some answered,  
'This is called

The Shrine of Knowledge;' and  
another, 'This,

The Shrine of Beauty;' and another,  
'Strength;'

And yet another, 'Youth.' And I  
would kneel

And say a prayer to my Love, and rise  
And seek another. Long, o'er land  
and sea,

I wandered, till I was not young or fair,  
Grown wretched, seeking my lost Love;  
and last,

Came to the smiling, hateful shrine  
where ruled

The queen of earthly love and all  
delight,

Cypris, but knelt not there, but asked  
of one

Who seemed her priest, if Eros dwelt  
with her.

Then to the subtle-smiling goddess'  
self

They led me. She with hatred in her  
eyes:

'What! thou to seek for Love, who  
art grown thin

And pale with watching! He is not  
for thee.

What Love is left for such? Thou  
didst despise

Love, and didst dwell apart. Love  
sits within

The young maid's eyes, making them  
beautiful.

Love is for youth, and joy, and happiness;  
 And not for withered lives. Ho! bind her fast.  
 Take her and set her to the vilest tasks,  
 And bend her pride by solitude and tears,  
 Who will not kneel to me, but dares to seek  
 A disembodied love. My son has gone  
 And left thee for thy fault, and thou shalt know  
 The misery of my thralls.

Then in her house

They bound me to hard tasks and vile,  
 and kept  
 My life from honour, chained among  
 her slaves  
 And lowest ministers, taking despite  
 And injury for food, and set to bind  
 Their wounds whom she had tortured,  
 and to feed  
 The pitiful lives which in her prisons  
 pent  
 Languished in hopeless pain. There is  
 no sight  
 Of suffering but I saw it, and was set  
 To succour it; and all my woman's  
 heart  
 Was torn with the ineffable miseries  
 Which love and life have worked; and  
 dwelt long time  
 In groanings and in tears.

And then, oh joy!

Oh miracle! once more again at length  
 I felt Love's arms around me, and the  
 kiss  
 Of Love upon my lips, and in the chill  
 Of deepest prison cells, 'mid vilest tasks,  
 The glow of his sweet breath, and the  
 warm touch  
 Of his invisible hand, and his sweet  
 voice,

Ay, sweeter than of old, and tenderer,  
 Speak to me, pierce me, hold me, fold  
 me round  
 With arms Divine, till all the sordid  
 earth  
 Was hued like heaven, and Life's dull  
 prison-house  
 Turned to a golden palace, and those  
 low tasks  
 Grew to be higher works and nobler  
 gains  
 Than any gains of knowledge, and at  
 last  
 He whispered softly, 'Dear, unclosethine eyes,  
 Thou mayst look on me now. I go no  
 more,  
 But am thine own for ever.'

Then with wings

Of gold we soared, I looking in his  
 eyes,  
 Over yon dark broad river, and this  
 dim land,  
 Scarce for an instant staying till we  
 reached  
 The inmost courts of heaven.

But sometimes still

I come here for a little, and speak a  
 word  
 Of peace to those who wait. The  
 slow wheel turns,  
 The cycles round themselves and grow  
 complete,  
 The world's year whitens to the  
 harvest-tide,  
 And one word only am I sent to say  
 To those dear souls, who wait here, or  
 who now  
 Breathe earthly air — one universal  
 word  
 To all things living, and the word is  
 'Love.'

Then soared she visibly before my  
gaze,  
And the heavens took her, and I knew  
my eyes  
Had seen the Soul of man, the death-  
less Soul,  
Defeated, struggling, purified, and blest.

---

Then all the choir of happy waiting  
shades,  
Heroes and queens, fair maidens and  
brave youths,  
Swept by me, rhythmic, slow, as if they  
trod

Some unheard measure, passing where  
I stood

In fair procession, each with a faint  
smile

Upon the lip, signing "Farewell, oh  
shade !

It shall be well with thee, as 'tis with us,  
If only thou art true. The world of  
Life,

The world of Death, are but opposing  
sides

Of one great orb, and the Light shines  
on both.

Oh, happy, happy shade ! Farewell !  
Farewell !"

And so they passed away.

## BOOK III.

## OLYMPUS.

BUT I, my gaze  
Following the soaring soul which now  
was lost

In the awakening skies, floated with  
her,

As in a trance, beyond the golden gates  
Which separate Earth from Heaven ;  
and to my thought,

Gladdened by that broad effluence of  
light,

This old earth seemed transfigured, and  
the fields,

So dim and bare, grew green and  
clothed themselves

With lustrous hues. A fine ethereal air  
Played round me as I mused, and filled  
the soul

With an ineffable content. What help  
In words to tell of things unreachd by  
words ?

Or how to engrave upon the treacherous  
thought

The fair and fugitive fancies of a  
dream,

Which vanish ere we fix them ?

But methinks

He knows the scene, who knows the  
one fair day,

One only and no more, which year by  
year

In springtime comes, when lingering  
winter flies,

And lo ! the bare boughs pranked with  
white and pink,

And golden clusters, and the green  
glades starred

With delicate primrose and deep  
odorous beds

Of violets, and on the tufted meads  
With kingcups lit, and cowslip bells,  
and blue

Sweet hyacinths, and frail anemones,  
The broad West wind breathes softly,  
and the air

Is tremulous with the lark, and thro'  
the woods  
The soft full-throated thrushes all day  
long  
Flood the green dells with joy, and  
thro' the dry  
Brown fields the sower strides, sowing  
his seed,  
And all is life and song. Or he who  
first,  
Whether in fair free boyhood, when the  
world  
Is his to choose, or when his fuller life  
Beats to another life, or afterwards,  
Keeping his youth within his children's  
eyes,  
Looks on the snow-clad everlasting  
hills,  
And marks the sunset smite them, and  
is glad  
Of the beautiful fair world.

A springtide land

It seemed, where East winds came not.  
Sweetest song  
Was everywhere, by glade or sunny  
plain;  
And thro' the golden valleys winding  
streams  
Rippled in glancing silver, and above,  
The blue hills rose, and over all a peak,  
White, awful, with a constant fleece of  
cloud  
Veiling its summit, towered. Unfailing  
Day  
Lighted it, for no turn of dawn and eve  
Came there, nor changing seasons, but  
a broad  
Fixed joy of Being, undisturbed by  
Time.

There, in a happy glade shut in by  
groves  
Of laurel and sweet myrtle, on a green

And flower-lit lawn, I seemed to see  
the ghosts  
Of the old gods. Upon the gentle slope  
Of a fair hill, a joyous company,  
The Immortals lay. Hard by, a mur-  
murous stream  
Fell through the flowers; below them,  
space on space,  
Laughed the immeasurable plains;  
beyond,  
The mystic mountain soared. Height  
after height  
Of bare rock ledges left the climbing  
pines,  
And reared their giddy, shining terraces  
Into the ethereal air. Above, the snows  
Of the white summit cleft the fleece of  
cloud  
Which always clothed it round.

Ah, fair and sweet,

Yet with a ghostly fairness, fine and  
thin,  
Those godlike Presences. Not dreams  
indeed,  
But something dream-like, were they.  
Blessed Shades  
Heroic and Divine, as when, in days  
When Man was young, and Time, the  
vivid thought  
Translated into Form the unattained  
Impossible Beauty of men's dreams,  
and fixed  
The Loveliness in marble.

As with awe

Following my spotless guide, I stood  
apart,  
Not daring to draw near; a shining form  
Rose from the throng, and floated,  
light as air,  
To where I trembled. And I knew  
the face  
And form of Artemis, the fair, the pure,  
The undefiled. A crescent silvery moon

Shone thro' her locks, and by her side  
she bore

A quiver of golden darts. At sight of  
whom

I felt a sudden chill, like his who once  
Looked upon her and died; yet could  
not fear,

Seeing how fair she was. Her sweet  
voice rang

Clear as a bird's :

"Mortal, what fate hath brought  
Thee hither, uncleansed by death?

How canst thou breathe  
Immortal air, being mortal ! Yet fear  
not,

Since thou art come. For we too are  
of earth

Whom here thou seest : there were not  
a heaven

Were there no earth, nor gods, had men  
not been,

But each the complement of each and  
grown

The other's creature, is and has its being,  
A double essence, Human and Divine.

So that the God is hidden in the man,  
And something Human bounds and  
forms the God ;

Which else had shown too great and  
undefined

For mortal sight, and having no human  
eye

To see it, were unknown. But we who  
bore

Sway of old time, we were but attributes  
\* Of the great God who is all Things

that be—

The Pillar of the Earth and starry Sky,  
The Depth of the great Deep ; the Sun,

the Moon,

The Word which Makes ; the All-  
compelling Love—

\* See the Orphic Hymns.

For all Things lie within His Infinite  
Form."

Even as she spake, a throng of shapes  
divine

Floated around me, filling all my soul  
With fair unearthly beauty, and the air

With such ambrosial perfume as is born,  
When morning breathes upon a tropic

sea,

From boundless wastes of flowers ; and  
as I knelt

In rapture, lo ! the same clear voice  
again

From out the throng of gods :

"Those whom thou seest  
Were even as I, embodiments of Ilim

Who is the Centre of all Life : myself  
The Maiden-Queen of Purity ; and

Strength,

Divine when unabused ; Love too, the  
Spring

And Cause of Things ; and Knowledge,  
which lays bare

Their secret ; and calm Duty, Queen  
of all,

And Motherhood, in one ; and Youth,  
which bears,

Beauty of Form and Life and Light,  
and breathes

The breath of Inspiration ; and the Soul,  
The particle of God, sent down to man,

Which doth in turn reveal the world  
and God.

Wherefore it is men called on  
Artemis,

The refuge of young souls ; for still in  
age

They keep some dim reflection uneffaced  
Of a Diviner Purity than comes

To the spring days of youth, when all  
the world



Smiles, and the rapid blood thro' the  
 young veins  
 Courses, and all is glad ; yet knowing  
 too  
 That innocence is young—before the soil  
 And smirch of sadder knowledge,  
 settling on it,  
 Sully its primal whiteness. So they  
 knelt  
 At my white shrines, the eager boyish  
 souls,  
 To whom life's road showed like a dewy  
 field  
 In early summer dawns, when to the  
 sound  
 Of youth's clear voice, and to the  
 cheerful rush  
 Of the tumultuous feet and clamorous  
 tongues.  
 Careering onwards, fair and dappled  
 fawns,  
 Strange birds with jewelled plumes,  
 fierce spotted pards,  
 Rise in the joyous chase, to be caught  
 and slain  
 By the young conqueror ; nor yet the  
 charm  
 Of sensual ease allures. And they knelt  
 too,  
 The pure sweet maidens fair and fancy-  
 free,  
 Whose innocent virgin hearts shrank  
 from the touch  
 Of passion as from wrong—sweet moon-  
 lit liyes  
 Which fade, and pale, and vanish, in  
 the glare  
 Of Love's hot noontide : these came  
 robed in white,  
 With holy hymns and soaring liturgies :  
 And so men fabled me, a huntress now,  
 Borne thro' the flying woodlands, fair  
 and free ;

And now the pale cold Moon, Light  
 without warmth,  
 Zeal without touch of passion, heavenly  
 love  
 For human, and the altar for the home.  
  
 But oh, how sweet it was to take the  
 love  
 And awe of my young worshippers ; to  
 watch  
 The pure young gaze and hear the pure  
 young voice  
 Mount in the hymn, or see the gay  
 troop come  
 With the first dawn of day, brushing  
 the dew  
 From the unpolluted fields, and wake  
 to song  
 The slumbering birds ; strong in their  
 innocence !  
 I did not envy any goddess of all  
 The Olympian company her votaries !  
 Ah, happy days of old which now are  
 gone !  
 A memory and a dream ! for now on  
 earth  
 I rule no longer o'er young willing  
 hearts  
 In voluntary fealty, which would cease  
 When Love, with fiery accents calling,  
 woke  
 The slumbering soul ; as now it should  
 for those  
 Who kneel before the purer, sadder  
 shrine  
 Which has replaced my own. But ah !  
 too oft,  
 Not always, but too often, shut from  
 life  
 Within pale life-long cloisters and the  
 bars  
 Of hopeless convent prisons, year by  
 year,

Age after age, the white souls fade and  
 pine  
 Which simulate the joyous service free  
 Of those young worshippers. I would  
 that I  
 Might loose the captives' chain; 'or  
 Herakles,  
 Who was a mortal once."

But he who stood

Colossal at my side :  
 " I toil no more  
 On earth, nor wield again the mighty  
 strength  
 Which Zeus once gave me for the cure  
 of ill.  
 I have run my race ; I have done my  
 work ; I rest  
 For ever from the toilsome days I gave  
 To the suffering race of men. And yet,  
 indeed,  
 Methinks they suffer still. Tyrannous  
 growths  
 And monstrous vex them still. Pesti-  
 lence lurks  
 And sweeps them down. Treacheries  
 come, and wars,  
 And slay them still. Vaulting ambition  
 leaps  
 And falls in bloodshed still. But I am  
 here  
 At rest, and no man kneels to me, or  
 keeps  
 Reverence for strength mighty yet un-  
 abused—  
 Strength which is Power, God's choicest  
 gift, more rare  
 And precious than all Beauty, or the  
 charm  
 Of Wisdom, since it is the instrument

Thro' which all Nature works. For  
 now the earth  
 Is full of meekness, and a new God  
 rules,  
 Teaching strange precepts of humility  
 And mercy and forgiveness. Yet I  
 throw  
 There is no lack of bloodshed and  
 deceit  
 And groanings, and the tyrant works  
 his wrong  
 Even as of old ; but now there is no  
 arm  
 Like mine, made strong by Zeus, to  
 beat him down,  
 Him and his wrong together. Yet I  
 know  
 I am not all discrowned. The strong  
 brave souls,  
 The manly tender hearts, whom tale of  
 wrong  
 To woman or child, to all weak things  
 and small,  
 Fires like a blow ; kindling the righteous  
 flush  
 Of anger on the brow ; knotting the  
 cords  
 Of muscle on the arm ; with one desire  
 To hew the spoiler down, and make an  
 end,  
 And go their way for others ; making  
 light  
 Of toil and pain, and too laborious days,  
 And peril ; beat unchanged, albeit they  
 serve  
 A Lord of meekness. For the world  
 still needs  
 Its champion as of old, and finds him  
 still.  
 Not always now with mighty sinews  
 and thews  
 Like mine, though still these profit, but  
 keen brain

And voice to move men's souls to love the right	But bearing, as it seemed, some faintest trace
And hate the wrong; even tho' the bodily form	Of earthly struggle still, not the gay ease
Be weak, of giant strength, strong to assail	Of the elder heaven-born gods.
The hydra heads of Evil, and to slay The monsters that now waste them: Ignorance,	
Self-seeking, coward fears, the hate of Man,	And then there came Beauty and Joy in one, bearing the form Of woman. How to reach with halting words
Disguised as love of God. These labour still	That infinite Perfection? All have known
With toil as hard as mine. For what was it	The breathing marbles which the Greek has left
To strive with bodily ills, and do great deeds	Who saw her near, and strove to fix her charms,
Of daring and of strength, and bear the crown,	And exquisitely failed; or those fair forms
To his high task who wages lifelong strife	The Painter offered at a later shrine, And failed. Nay, what are words?— he knows it well
With an impalpable foe; conquering indeed,	Who loves, or who has loved.
But, ere he hears the psan or sees the pomp	She with a smile Playing around her rosy lips; as plays The sunbeam on a stream:
Laid low in the arms of Death? And tho' men cease	"Shall I complain Men kneel to me no longer, taking to them
To worship at my shrine, yet not the less	Some graver, sterner worship; grown too wise
It is the toils I knew, the pains I bore For others, which have kept the stead- fast heart	For fleeting joys of Love? Nay, Love is Youth,
Of manhood undefiled, and nerved the arm	And still the world is young. Still shall I reign
Of sacrifice, and made the martyr strong To do and bear, and taught the race of men	Within the hearts of men, while Time shall last
How godlike 'tis to suffer thro' life, and die	And Life renews itself. All Life that is,
At last for others' good!"	From the weak things of earth or sea or air,
The strong god ceased, And stood a little, musing; blest in- deed,	

Which creep or float for an hour ; to  
 godlike man—  
 All know me and are mine. I am the  
 source  
 And mother of all, both gods and men ;  
 the spring  
 Of Force and Joy, which, penetrating  
 all  
 Within the hidden depths of the Un-  
 known,  
 Sets the blind germ of Being, and from  
 the bond  
 Of incomplete and dual Essences  
 Evolves the harmony which is Life.  
 The world  
 Were dead without my rays, who am  
 the Light  
 Which vivifies the world. Nay, but for  
 me,  
 The universal order which attracts  
 Sphere unto sphere, and keeps them in  
 their paths  
 For ever, were no more. All things  
 are bound  
 Within my golden chain, whose name  
 is Love.

And if there be, indeed, some sterner  
 souls  
 Or sunk in too much learning, or  
 hedged round  
 By care and greed, or haply too much  
 rapt  
 By pale ascetic fervours, to delight  
 To kneel to me, the universal voice  
 Scorns them as those who, spurning  
 wilfully  
 The good that Nature offers, dwell un-  
 blest  
 Who might be blest, but would not.  
 Every voice  
 Of bard in every age has hymned me.  
 All

The breathing marbles, all the glowing  
 hues  
 Of painting, praise me. Even the love-  
 less shades  
 Of dim monastic cloisters show some  
 gleam,  
 Tho' faint, of me. Amid the busy  
 throngs  
 Of cities reign I, and o'er lonely  
 plains,  
 Beyond the ice-fields of the frozen  
 North  
 And the warm waves of undiscovered  
 seas.

For I was born out of the sparkling  
 foam  
 Which lights the crest of the blue mystic  
 wave,  
 Stirred by the wandering breath of Life's  
 pure dawn  
 From a young soul's clear depths.  
 There, without voice,  
 Stretched on the breathing curve of a  
 young breast,  
 Fluttering a little, fresh from the great  
 deep  
 Of life, and creamy as the opening rose,  
 Naked I lie, naked yet unashamed,  
 While youth's warm tide steals round  
 me with a kiss,  
 And floods each limb with fairness.  
 Shame I know not—  
 Shame is for wrong, and not for inno-  
 cence—  
 The veil which Error grasps to hide  
 itself  
 From the awful Eye. But I, I lie un-  
 veiled  
 And unashamed—the livelong day I  
 lie,  
 The warm wave murmuring to me ; and,  
 all night,

<p>Hidden in the moonlit caves of happy Sleep, I dream until the morning and am glad.</p> <p>Why should I seek to clothe myself, and hide The treasure of my Beauty? Shame may wait On those for whom 'twas given. The sties of sense Are none of mine ; the brutish, loveless wrong, The venal charm, the simulated flush Of fleshly passion, they are none of mine, Only corruptions of me. Well I know The counterfeit the stronger, since gross souls And brutish sway the earth ; yet not the less All sense is consecrated, and I deem 'Twere better to grow soft and sink in sense Than gloat o'er blood and wrong.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">My kingdom is</p> <p>O'er infinite grades of life. Yet 'tis in man I find my worthiest worship. Where man is, A youth and a maid, a youth and a maid, nought else Is wanting for my temple. Every clime Kneels to me—the long breaker falls in foam Under the palms, swelling the merry noise Of savage bridals, and the straight brown limbs Know me, and over all the endless plains</p>	<p>I reign, and by the tents on the hot sand And sea-girt isles am queen, and by the sides Of silent mountains, where the white cots gleam Upon the green hill pastures, and no sound But the thunder of the avalanche is borne To the listening rocks around ; and by fair lands Where all is peace ; where thro' the happy hush Of tranquil summer evenings, 'mid the corn, Or thro' cool arches of the gadding vines, The lovers stray together hand in hand, Hymning my praise ; and by the echoing streets Of stately cities—o'er the orbèd earth, The burning South, the icy North, the old And immemorial East, the unbounded West, No new god comes to spoil me utterly— All worship and are mine !' With a sweet smile Upon her rosy mouth, the goddess ceased ; And when she spake no more, the silence weighed As heavy on my soul as when it takes Some gracious melody, and leaves the ear Unsatisfied and longing, till the fount Of sweetness springs again.</p>
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But while I stood  
Expectant, lo ! a fair pale form drew  
near  
With front severe, and wide blue eyes  
which bore  
Mild wisdom in their gaze. Clear  
purity  
Shone from her—not the young-eyed  
innocence  
Of her whom first I saw, but that which  
comes  
From wider knowledge, which restrains  
the tide  
Of passionate youth, and leads the  
musing soul  
By the calm deeps of Wisdom. And  
I knew  
My eyes had seen the fair, the virgin  
Queen,  
Who once within her shining Parthenon  
Beheld the sages kneel.  
She with clear voice  
And coldly sweet, yet with a softness  
too,  
Such as befits a virgin :  
“ She doth right  
To boast her sway, my sister, seeing  
indeed  
That all things are as by a double law,  
And from a double root the tree of  
Life  
Springs up to the face of heaven. Body  
and Soul,  
Matter and Spirit, lower joys of Sense  
And higher joys of Thought, I know  
that both  
Build up the shrine of Being. The  
brute sense  
Leaves man a brute ; but, winged with  
soaring thought  
Mounts to high heaven. The un-  
embodied spirit,  
Dwelling alone, unmated, void of sense,

Shows impotent. And yet I know  
there is,  
Far off, but not too far for mortal reach,  
A calmer height, where, nearer to the  
stars,  
Thought sits alone and gazes with rapt  
gaze,  
A large-eyed maiden in a robe of white,  
Who brings the light of Knowledge  
down, and draws  
To her pontifical eyes a bridge of gold,  
Which spans from earth to heaven.  
For what were life,  
If things of sense were all, for those  
large souls  
And high, whom grudging Nature has  
shut fast  
Within unlovely forms, or from whose  
life  
The circuit of the rapid gliding years  
Steals the brief gift of beauty ? Shall  
men hold  
With idle singers, all the treasure of  
hope  
Is lost with youth — swift-fleeting,  
treacherous youth,  
Which fades and flies before the ripen-  
ing brain  
Crowns life with Wisdom's crown ?  
Nay, even in youth,  
Is it not more to tread the difficult  
heights  
Alone—the cold free heights—and mark  
the vale  
Lie breathless in the glare, or hidden  
and blurred  
By cloud and storm ; or pestilence and  
war  
Creep on with blood and death ; while  
the soul dwells  
Apart upon the peaks, outfronts the sun  
As the eagle does, or takes the coming  
dawn

While all the vale is dark, and knows  
the springs  
Of tiny rivulets hurrying from the snows,  
Which soon shall swell to vast resistless  
floods,  
And feed the Oceans which divide the  
World ?

Oh, ecstasy! oh, wonder! oh, delight!  
Which neither the slow-withering wear  
of Time,  
That takes all else—the smooth and  
rounded cheek  
Of youth; the lightsome step; the  
warm young heart  
Which beats for love or friend; the  
treasure of hope  
Immeasurable; the quick-coursing  
blood  
Which makes it joy to be,—ay, takes  
them all  
(Or makes them naught—nor yet satiety  
Born of too full possession, takes or  
mars !  
Oh, fair delight of learning! which  
grows great  
And stronger and more keen, for slower  
limbs,  
And dimmer eyes and loneliness, and  
loss  
Of lower good—wealth, friendship, ay,  
and Love—  
When the swift soul, turning its weary  
gaze  
From the old vanished joys, projects  
itself  
Into the void and floats in empty space,  
Striving to reach the mystic source of  
Things,  
The secrets of the earth and sea and  
air,  
The Law that binds the process of the  
sun,

The awful depths of Mind and Thought;  
the prime  
Unfathomable mystery of God !

Is there, then, any who holds my  
worship cold  
And lifeless? Nay, but 'tis the light  
which cheers  
The waning life! Love thou thy love,  
brave youth!  
Cleave to thy love, fair maid! it is the  
Law  
Which dominates the world, that bids  
ye use  
Your nature; but, when now the fuller  
tide  
Slackens a little, turn your calmer eyes  
To the fair page of Knowledge. It is  
power  
I give, and power is precious. It is  
strength  
To live four-square, careless of outward  
shows,  
And self-sufficing. It is clearer sight  
To know the rule of life, the Eternal  
scheme;  
And, knowing it, to do and not to err,  
And, doing, to be blest."

The calm voice soared  
Higher and higher to the close; the  
cold  
Clear accents, fired as by a hidden fire,  
Glowed into life and tenderness, and  
throbbed  
As with some spiritual ecstasy  
Sweeter than that of Love.

But as they died,  
I heard an ampler voice; and looking,  
marked

<p>A fair and gracious form. She seemed  a Queen  Who ruled o'er gods and men; the  majesty  Of perfect womanhood. No opening  bud  Of beauty, but the full consummate  flower  rs; and from her mild large  yes looked forth  ommand, and motherhood, and  home,  And pure affection. Awe and reverence  O'erspread me, as I knew my eyes had  looked  On sovereign Heré, mother of the gods.</p> <p>She, with clear, rounded utterance,  sweet and calm:  "I know the charm of stainless Inno-  cence;  I know Love's fruit is good and fair  to see  And taste, if any gain it, and I know  How brief Youth's Passion-tide, which  when it ebbs  Leaves Life athirst for Knowledge, and  I know  How fair the realm of Mind, where  the keen soul  Yearning to rise, wings its impetuous  way  Beyond the bounds of Thought; and  yet there is  A higher bliss than theirs, which best  befits  A mortal life, compact of Body and Soul,  And therefore double-natured—a calm  path  Which lies before the feet, thro' common  ways  And undistinguished crowds of toiling  men,</p>	<p>And yet is hard to tread, tho' seeming  smooth,  And yet, tho' level, finds a worthier  crown.</p> <p>For Knowledge is a steep which few  may climb,  While Duty is a path which all may tread.  And if the Goal of Life and Thought  be this,  How best to speed the mighty scheme,  which still  Fares onward day by day—the Life of  the World,  Which is the sum of petty lives, that  wane  And die so this may live—how then  shall each  Of that great multitude of faithful souls  Who walk not on the heights, fulfil  himself,  But by the duteous Life which looks  not forth  Beyond its narrow sphere, and finds its  work,  And works it out; content, this done,  to fall  And perish, if Fate will, so the great  Scheme  Goes onward?  Wherefore am I Queen in Heaven  And Earth, whose realm is Duty, bear-  ing rule  More constant and more wide than  those whose words  Thou heardest last. Mine are the  striving souls  Of fathers plodding day by day obscure  And unrewarded, save by their own  hearts,  Mid wranglings of the Forum or the mart;  Who long for joys of Thought, and yet  must toil</p>
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Unmurmuring thro' dull lives from youth to age ;	Which no man recks of, rear the stately tree
Who haply might have worn instead the crown	Of Knowledge, not for itself sought out, but found
Of Honour and of Fame : mine the fair mothers	In the dusty ways of life—a fairer growth Than springs in cloistered shades ; and from the sun
Who, for the love of children and of home,	Of Duty, blooms sweeter and more divine
When passion dies, expend their careful years	The fair ideal of the Race, than comes From glittering gains of Learning.
In loving labour sweetened by the sense	Life, full life, Full-flowered, full-fruited, reared from homely earth,
Of Duty : mine the statesman who toils on	Rooted in duty, and thro' long calm years
Thro' vigilant nights and days, guiding his State,	Bearing its load of healthful energies ; Stretching its arms on all sides ; fed with dews
Yet finds no gratitude ; and those white souls	Of cheerful sacrifice, and clouds of care, And rain of useful tears ; warmed by the sun
Who give themselves for others all their years	Of calm affection, till it breathes itself In perfume to the heavens—this is the prize
In trivial tasks of Pity. The fine growths	I hold most dear, more precious than the fruit
Of Man and Time are mine, and spend themselves	Of Knowledge or of Love."
For me and for the mystical End which lies	The goddess ceased
Beyond their gaze and mine, and yet is good,	As dies some gracious harmony, the child
Tho' hidden from men and gods.	Of wedded themes which single and alone
For as the flower	Were discords, but united breathe a sound
Of the tiger-lily gay with varied hues	Sweet as the sounds of heaven.
Is for a day, then fades and leaves be- hind	
Fairness nor fruit, while the green tiny tuft	
Swells to the purple of the clustering grape	
Or golden waves of wheat ; so lives of men	
Which show most splendid, fade and are deceased	And then stood forth
And leave no trace ; while those, un- marked, unseen,	The last of the gods I saw, the first in place

And dignity and beauty, the young  
god  
Who grows not old, the Light of  
Heaven and Earth,  
The Worker from afar, who darts the  
fire  
Of inspiration on the bard and bathes  
The world in hues of heaven—the  
golden link  
Between High God and Man.

With a sweet voice  
Whose every note was perfect me-  
lody—  
The melody has fled, the words re-  
main—  
Apollo sang :

"I know how fair the face  
Of Purity; I know the treasure of  
Strength;  
I know the charm of Love, the calmer  
grace  
Of Wisdom and of Duteous well-spent  
lives :  
And yet there is a loftier height than  
these.

There is a Height higher than mortal  
thought ;  
There is a Love warmer than mortal  
love ;  
There is a Life which, taking not its  
hues  
From Earth or earthly things, grows  
white and pure  
And higher than the petty cares of  
men,  
And is a blessed life and glorified.

Oh, fair young souls, strain upward,  
upward still,  
Even to the heavenly source of Purity !  
Brave hearts, bear on and suffer !  
Strike for right,

Strong arms, and hew down wrong !  
The world hath need  
Of all of you—the sensual, wrongful  
world !

Hath need of you, and of thee too,  
fair Love.  
Oh, lovers, cling together ! the old  
world  
Is full of Hate. Sweeten it ; draw in  
one  
Two separate chords of Life ; and  
from the bond  
Of twin souls lost in Harmony create  
A Fair God dwelling with you—Love  
the Lord !

Waft yourselves, yearning souls, upon  
the stars ;  
Sow yourselves on the wandering winds  
of space ;  
Watch patient all your days, if your  
eyes take  
Some dim, cold ray of Knowledge.  
The dull world  
Hath need of you — the purblind,  
slothful world !

Live on, brave lives, chained to the  
narrow round  
Of Duty ; live, expend yourselves, and  
make  
The orb of Being wheel on steadfastly  
Upon its path—the Lord of Life  
alone  
Knows to what goal of Good ; work on,  
live on :  
And yet there is a higher work than  
yours.

To have looked upon the face of the  
Unknown  
And Perfect Beauty. To have heard  
the voice

Of Godhead in the winds and in the  
seas.

To have known Him in the circling of  
the suns,  
And in the changeful fates and lives of  
men.

To be fulfilled with Godhead as a cup  
Filled with a precious essence, till the  
hand  
On marble or on canvas falling, leaves  
Celestial traces, or from reed or string  
Draws out faint echoes of the voice  
Divine  
That bring God nearer to a faithless  
world.

Or, higher still and fairer and more  
blest,  
To be His seer, His prophet ; to be  
the voice  
Of the Ineffable Word ; to be the glass  
Of the Ineffable Light, and bring them  
down  
To bless the earth, set in a shrine of  
Song.

For Knowledge is a barren tree and  
bare,  
Bereft of God, and Duty but a word,  
And Strength but Tyranny, and Love,  
Desire,  
And Purity a folly ; and the Soul,  
Which brings down God to Man, the  
Light to the world ;  
He is the Maker, and is blest, is blest !"

He ended, and I felt my soul grow  
faint  
With too much sweetness.

In a mist of grace  
They faded, that bright company, and  
seemed

To melt into each other and shape  
themselves

Into new forms, and those fair god-  
desses

Blent in a perfect woman—all the calm  
High motherhood of Heré, the sweet  
smile

Of Cypris, fair Athené's earnest eyes,  
And the young purity of Artemis,  
Blent in a perfect woman ; and in her  
arms,

Fused by some cosmic interlacing curves  
Of Beauty into a new Innocence,  
A child with eyes divine, a little child,  
A little child—no more.

And those great gods  
Of Power and Beauty left a heavenly  
form

Strong not to act but suffer ; fair and  
meek,

Not proud and eager ; with soft eyes  
of grace,

Not bold with joyous youth ; and for  
the fire

Of song, and for the happy careless life,  
A sorrowful pilgrimage—changed, yet  
the same,

Only Diviner far ; and bearing higher  
The Life God-lighted and the Sacrifice.

And when these faded wholly, at my  
side,  
Tho' hidden before by those too-radiant  
forms,

I was aware once more of her, my guide  
Psyche, who had not left me, floating  
near

On golden wings ; and all the plains of  
heaven

Were left to us, me and my soul alone.

Then when my thought revived  
again, I said

Whispering, "But Zeus I saw not, the  
prime Source  
And Sire of all the gods."

And she, bent low  
With downcast eyes: "Nay. Thou  
hast seen of Him.

All that thine eyes can bear, in those  
fair forms

Which are but parts of Him and are  
indeed

Attributes of the Substance which sup-  
ports

The Universe of Things—the Soul of  
the World,

The Stream which flows Eternal, from  
no Source

Into no Sea. His Purity, His Strength,  
His Love, His Knowledge, His un-  
changing rule

Of Duty, thou hast seen, only a part  
And not the whole, being a finite mind  
Too weak for infinite thought; nor,  
couldst thou see

All of Him visible to mortal sight,  
Wouldst thou see all His essence, since  
the gods—

Glorified essences of Human mould,  
Who are but Zeus made visible to  
men—

See Him not wholly, only some thin  
edge

And halo of His glory; nor know they  
What vast and unsuspected Universes  
Lie beyond thought, where yet He  
rules, like those

Vast Suns we cannot see, round which  
our Sun

Moves with his system, or those darker  
still

Which not even thus we know, but yet  
exist

Tho' no eye marks, nor thought itself,  
and lurk

In the awful Depths of Space; or that  
which is

Not orb'd as yet, but indiscrete, con-  
fused,

Sown thro' the void—the faintest gleam  
of light

Which sets itself to Be. And yet is  
He

There too, and \* rules, none seeing.  
But sometimes

To this our heaven, which is so like to  
earth

But nearer to Him, for awhile He shows  
Some gleam of His own brightness, and  
methinks

It cometh soon; but thou, if thou  
shouldst gaze,

Thy Life will rush to His—the tiny  
spark

Absorbed in that full blaze—and what  
there is

Of mortal fall from thee."

But I: "Oh, soul,  
What holdeth Life more precious than  
to know

The Giver and to die?"

Then she: "Behold!  
Look upward and adore."

And with the word,  
Unhasting, undelaying, gradual, sure,  
The floating cloud which clothed the  
hidden peak

Rose slow in awful silence, laying bare  
Spire after rocky spire, snow after snow,  
Whiter and yet more dreadful, till at  
last

It left the summit clear.

Then with a bound,  
In the twinkling of an eye, in the flash  
of a thought,

I knew an Awful Effluence of Light,  
Formless, Ineffable, Perfect, burst on

And flood my being round, and draw  
 my life  
 Into itself. I saw my guide bent down  
 Prostrate, her wings before her face;  
 and then  
 No more.

But when I woke from my long  
 trance  
 Behold, it was no longer Tartarus,  
 Nor Hades, nor Olympus, but the bare  
 And unideal aspect of the fields  
 Which Spring not yet had kissed—the  
 strange old Earth  
 So far more fabulous now than in the  
 days  
 When Man was young, nor yet the  
 mystery  
 Of Time and Fate transformed it. From  
 the hills,  
 The long night fled at last, the un-  
 clouded sun,  
 The dear, fair sun, leapt upward swift,  
 and smote  
 My sight with rays of gold, and pierced  
 my brain  
 With too much light ere my entranced  
 eyes  
 Could hide themselves.

And I was on the Earth  
 Dreaming the dream of Life again, as  
 late

I dreamed the dream of Death.

Another day  
 Dawned on the race of men; another  
 world;  
 New heavens, and new earth.

And as I went  
 Across the lightening fields, upon a  
 bank  
 I saw a single snowdrop glance, and  
 bring  
 Promise of Spring; and keeping my  
 old thought  
 In the old fair Hellenic vesture dressed,  
 I felt myself a ghost, and seemed to be  
 Now fair Adonis hasting to the arms  
 Of his lost love—now sad Persephone  
 Restored to mother earth—or that high  
 shade  
 Orpheus, who gave up heaven to save  
 his love,  
 And is rewarded—or young Marcyas,  
 Who spent his youth and life for song,  
 and yet  
 Was happy though in torture—or the  
 fair  
 And dreaming youth I saw who still  
 awaits,  
 Hopeful, the unveiling heaven, when  
 he shall see  
 His fair ideal love. The birds sang  
 blithe;  
 There came a tinkling from the waking  
 fold;  
 And on the hillside from the cot a girl  
 Tripped singing with her pitcher. All  
 the sounds  
 And thoughts which still are beautiful—  
 Youth, Song,  
 Dawn, Spring, Renewal—and my soul  
 was glad  
 Of all the freshness, and I felt again  
 The youth and spring-tide of the world,  
 and thought,  
 Which feigned those fair and gracious  
 fantasies.

For every dawn that breaks brings a  
 new world,

And every budding bosom a new life ;  
 These fair tales, which we know so  
     beautiful,  
 Show only finer than our lives to-day  
 Because their voice was clearer, and  
     they sound  
 A sacred bard to sing them. We are  
     pent,  
 Who sing to-day, by all the garnered  
     wealth  
 Of ages of past song. We have no  
     more  
     world to choose from, who,  
     where'er we turn  
 Find sad through old legends and fair.  
     Yet must we sing  
     We have no choice ; and if more hard  
     the toil  
     at noon, when all is clear, than in the  
     dusk of early morn, yet do we  
     find  
 A movement its own guerdon, and at  
     last  
 The song of manhood grows  
     more sweet  
 Than the high note of youth.  
     For Age, long Age !  
 Nought else divides us from the fresh  
     young days  
 Which men call ancient ; seeing that  
     we in turn  
 Shall one day be Time's ancients, and  
     inspire  
 The wiser, higher race, which yet shall  
     sing  
 Because to sing is human, and high  
     thought  
 Grows rhythmic ere its close. Nought  
     else there is  
 But that weird beat of Time, which  
     doth disjoin  
 To-day from Hellas.

How should any hold  
 Those precious scriptures only old-  
     world tales  
 Of strange impossible torments and  
     false gods ;  
 Of men and monsters in some brainless  
     dream,  
 Coherent, yet unmeaning, linked to-  
     gether  
 By some false skein of song ?  
     Nay ! evermore,  
 All things and thoughts, both new and  
     old, are writ  
 Upon the unchanging human heart and  
     soul.  
 Has Passion still no prisoners ? Pine  
     there now  
 No lives which fierce Love, sinking into  
     Lust,  
 Has drowned at last in tears and blood  
     —plunged down  
 To the blackest depths of Hell ? Have  
     not strong Will  
 And high Ambition rotted into Greed  
 And Wrong, for any, as of old, and  
     whelmed  
 The struggling soul in ruin ? Hell lies  
     near  
 Around us as does Heaven, and in the  
     World,  
 Which is our Hades, still the chequered  
     souls  
 Compact of good and ill—not all accurst  
 Nor altogether blest—a few brief years  
 Travel the little journey of their lives,  
 They know not to what end. The  
     weary woman  
 Sunk deep in ease and sated with her life,  
 Much loved and yet unloving, pines  
     to-day  
 As Helen ; still the poet strives and sings,  
 And hears Apollo's music, and grows  
     dumb,

<p>And suffers, yet is happy; still the young Fond dreamer seeks his high ideal love, And finds her name is Death; still doth the fair . . . And innocent life, bound naked to the rock, Redeem the race; still the gay tempter goes And leaves his victim, stone; still common pain Binds souls with closer links of nobler love, Than Death itself can sever; still the sight Of too great beauty blinds us, and we lose The sense of earthly splendours, gaining Heaven.</p> <p>And still the skies are opened as of old To the entranced gaze, ay, nearer far And brighter than of yore; and Might is there, And Infinite Purity is there, and high Eternal Wisdom, and the calm clear face Of Duty, and a higher, stronger Love And Light in one, and a new, reverend Name,</p>	<p>Greater than any and combining all; And over all, veiled with a veil of cloud, God set far off, too bright for mortal eyes.</p> <p>And always, always, with each soul that comes And goes, comes that fair form which was my guide, Hovering, with golden wings and eyes divine, Above the bed of birth, the bed of death, Still breathing heavenly airs of death- less love.</p> <p>For while a youth is lost in soaring thought, And while a maid grows sweet and beautiful, And while a spring-tide coming lights the earth, And while a child, and while a flower is born, And while one wrong cries for redress and finds A soul to answer, still the world is young!</p>
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## G W E N .

### PROLOGUE.

<p>Nor of old time alone Was Life a scene of hopes and fears, High joys and bitter tears; Nor Chance nor Fate are done; Nor from our fuller Day The fabled gods have wholly fled away;</p>	<p>The World and Man to-day are young As when blind Homer sung.</p> <p>What if the old forms change? They were but forms, the things remain. What if our fear and pain Show not like monsters strange?</p>
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The self-same path of life  
We tread, who fare beneath the sun  
to-day ;  
We sink or triumph in the strife  
No otherwise than they.

Compact of good and ill  
Their life of old was, as is ours ;  
The same mysterious Will  
Controlled their finite powers  
And to strange thoughts of Fate  
And workings of a fixed Necessity  
Which rules both small and great.  
As they bowed, so bow we.

And Love, the Lord and King—  
Not Eros, but diviner far—  
Still upon heavenward wing  
Mounts like a shining star.  
Than clouds and thunders stronger,  
He brings a clear ray from the invisible  
Sun ;  
And when he shines no longer,  
Life's play is done.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—HENRY.

The sweet cold air of these untrodden  
hills  
Breathes gently. From the bustle of  
the inn  
I turn refreshed to this free mountain-  
side,  
And listen to the innumerable sound  
Of the loud brook beneath, which roars  
and spumes  
Brown-white against the granite. These  
thick firs  
Shed balm upon the evening air ; there  
comes

No footstep but the rabbit's or the  
shrew's  
Upon this grassy path, which winds  
and winds  
Around the hill-side, under promon-  
tories  
Of gold and purple, to the grey old  
church,  
Where, chancing yesterday at eve, I  
caught  
The sound of hymns, richer and fuller  
far  
Than those of yore ; and, hidden within  
the porch,  
Heard the prayers rising in a tongue  
unknown,  
But musical as Greek ; and not un-  
moved  
Watched the loud preacher, firing with  
his theme,  
Grow rhythmic, and the answering  
moans which showed  
He touched the peasant heart.

Ah, it was long  
Since I had heard men pray. I have  
seen the cloud  
Of incense rolling to the fretted roofs  
Of dim cathedrals in the fair old lands  
Where Faith weds not with Reason ; I  
have heard  
The Benediction service, pure and  
sweet,  
Lit by young voices ; I have watched  
with fear  
In college aisles the polished, delicate  
priest  
Poise his smooth periods on the razor  
edge  
Of a too fine-drawn logic ; I have stood  
And listened all unmoved, or all  
ashamed  
That I was moved a little, by the  
trick



And artifice of speech which, though I  
 knew it,  
 Could cheat the heart a moment, while  
 the preacher  
 Enchained his ignorant thousands.  
 None of these  
 Moved me as that unknown tongue  
 yesterday.  
 I thought my faith reviving. Tush !  
 what folly !  
 That died long years ago from the roots,  
 dried up  
 By the strong glare of knowledge, nor  
 could aught  
 Of all the miracles the Churchmen  
 feign  
 E'er water it to life. That died long  
 since,  
 Struck dead by German learning and  
 the strong  
 And arrogant Priests of Science. Yet  
 God knows—  
 If God there be—I would give my life  
 to know  
 The strong Belief of old, when little  
 hands  
 Were folded morn and eve, and little  
 eyes  
 Scarce open from the night, or half  
 weighed down  
 By the long hours of play, were raised  
 to see  
 Heaven in a mother's gaze.

I would my soul  
 Might cast from it the dead unlovely  
 load  
 Of dead men's speculations, rottennemes  
 Borne of unloving lives which took the  
 cell  
 And cloister for the home, the mid-  
 night lamp  
 For the glow of the hearth, and palsied  
 limbs of doubt

For the strong sire's firm stride. I am  
 young still ;  
 Yet often, when the flash of racing  
 oars,  
 The shouts, the rushing feet, the joyous  
 din,  
 Floated along the avenues at eve  
 To my still college chamber ; there  
 would come  
 A weariness, a surfeit, a distaste  
 Of all the painted show which men call  
 life,  
 Of all the sensual flush which men call  
 love,  
 Of all the hollow, vain logomachies  
 Men take for learning, and I seemed to  
 live  
 In premature decay, and to have touched  
 The fruit of life with eager lips and  
 found it  
 Crumble away in dust. And yet I know  
 How little 'tis my few laborious years  
 Have given me of learning that might  
 take  
 The utmost space of our allotted years,  
 Yet leave us still unquenched. And  
 yet what bar—  
 But seven little years—comes there that  
 parts  
 Me and my boyhood ? Seven fleeting  
 years !  
 And still I am a youth in frame, in  
 mind,  
 In innocence of harm in thought or  
 deed,  
 In scorn of wrong, and of the sensual  
 stye  
 Wherein the boar lies bound. Only  
 some power  
 There is which holds me fast and binds  
 my will ;  
 Only some dim and paralyzing force  
 Freezes the springs of action, till I lie

Moored in some tideless and forgotten  
creek,  
A ship which lies and rots ; while on  
high seas  
The salt winds blow, the white crests  
break, the sail,  
Filled with the stress of hope and youth  
and act,  
Speeds to the unseen harbour.

What shall cure  
This sickness of the soul? I would  
that I  
Were like that peasant lad whom yester-  
eve  
I saw—a stalwart boy, on whose red  
cheek  
The down of manhood showed ; whose  
strong arm wound  
Around his sweetheart's waist, as free  
from shame,  
While down the village street they  
loitered slow  
As 'twere the end of life to grow and  
breed  
And die, as do his herds. Yet here again  
I hesitate to act, because I know  
What love is in its cause, what in its  
end,  
And by what secret, miry paths full oft  
The winged god steals, when all his  
violet plumes  
Are smirched with foulness, and his  
fair eyes droop,  
Cloyed with the grosser sweets of lower  
earth,  
And the keen arrow flies not through  
the skies,  
But drops a blunted shaft.

I would I knew  
Less, or grew wiser, knowing. Golden  
hair,  
Sweet eyes, the lithe young form, the  
girlish voice

Which issues forth so soft from the red  
lips,  
Arched like the bow of Cupid, the soft  
neck  
Like a white pillar ; these were charms  
enow  
I warrant, which might draw as by a  
spell  
The rustic youth around. Yes, she was  
fair  
And sweet to see, and better, from her  
eyes  
A pure young soul looked forth, which  
was well housed  
Within so pure a body.—“Gwen” he  
called her—  
'Tis a fair name—when by the vicarage  
gate  
Her father stayed a moment courteously  
To greet the stranger, and her shy  
glance turned  
And met my tell-tale eyes. Surely a  
man  
Who had seen the hollowness of things  
might here  
Dwell not unhappy—purple hills  
around,  
And great tranquillity—a wife's sweet  
smile  
Beside him ; little hands to draw him  
back  
To the kindly earth ; and all the  
healthy load  
Of daily liturgies which make a heaven  
Of earth, and doubt a madness.  
Tush ! what folly  
Is this ? Have I not passed these things  
and spurned  
The weakness from me—I, who have  
given years  
Of youth to learning, and am tired a  
while  
Of my mistress, nothing more ?

And yet, what hope  
 Was it that brought me hither, this  
 last night  
 I spend among the mountains? Was  
 it to watch  
 The sunset glories smite the golden sea,  
 Or hear the fairy rivulet fall in foam  
 Among the pines? Or was it that I  
 thought  
 Perchance a slender form might pass  
 this way,  
 Crowned with the crown of youth, and  
 a sweet voice  
 Answer my eager greeting? Oh, what  
 fools  
 And hypocrites are we, when a strong  
 Power  
 Within us, unsuspected, binds us fast  
 And guides our footsteps! It was not  
 the face  
 Of outward nature, but the secret  
 spring  
 Which sets our Being to a hidden  
 end,  
 And bears the name of Love.  
 A gleam of blue,  
 A hat white-plumed—there is no other  
 form  
 As graceful; it is she! I may not  
 love,  
 Who cannot wed. I shall not see her  
 more.  
 I am young still; I will but look a  
 moment  
 In those young eyes, and hear that  
 sweet young voice  
 Refine our common English, and to-  
 morrow  
 She will forget the stranger who was  
 kind,  
 And I the mountain-nymph who was  
 so fair.

## SCENE II.

I know not why my books,  
 The learning that I loved, the charm  
 of art  
 Should for a young girl's looks  
 Fade from my thought and vanish and  
 depart.  
 It was but yesterday  
 I loved to pore upon the classic page  
 From morn to eve, nor could the  
 damsels gay,  
 Who from the parching town  
 Flock to these pure cool heights, move  
 me at all.  
 'Twas rest enough to roam  
 On the hill-side contented all day long,  
 And watch the shadows come  
 O'er moor and hill and purple wastes  
 of sea;  
 To see the evening fall  
 On breathless hill and dale, till sud-  
 denly  
 The pale moon rose; then wander  
 homeward slow  
 To my loved books with cheek with  
 health aglow.  
 And now nor hill, nor dale nor sea,  
 Nor the old task sufficeth me.  
 For two days since, ere night could  
 fall,  
 There came a young girl eighteen  
 summers old—  
 A simple girl, half peasant, lithe and  
 tall,  
 With deep-blue eyes and hair of gold  
 And straightway my philosophy,  
 My learning, all forsaking me,  
 Left me a love-sick boy—no more—  
 Me who have drunk so deep of wis-  
 dom  
 lore!

Too wise, I thought, to rest content  
 With any childish blandishment ;  
 Too wise ! ah fool ! for looking in  
     such eyes,  
 'Twere folly to be wise.

For as she tripped round the hill  
 To visit some cottage lowly,  
 With her basket of food on her arm,  
 She showed like Artemis holy ;  
 And I doffed to her, and she knew  
 The stranger of yesternight,  
 And her soft eyes showed more blue  
 As the rose on her cheek grew bright ;  
 And, some power impelling me, I—  
 I who was always counted so shy—  
 I walked by her side a little, though I  
     know

• That my tongue was tied and my brain  
     was slow ;  
 But however it was, yet her eyes were  
     blue,  
 And her roses all aglow.

And I walked by her side till she  
     came  
 To the cottage door, where we parted,  
 And a mingling of pride and of shame  
 Rose and left me awhile half-hearted.  
 I to stoop to a simple girl,  
 The child of a peasant sire !  
 Though the gown of the clergyman hides  
     many faults,  
 Surely 'twas mine to aspire.  
 What would they say—my friends,  
 The pale students, polished and proud,  
 If I, the first of them, stooped to take  
 A wife from the vulgar crowd ?  
 Or she, my dear mother, whose pride  
 Lies hid so deep in the depths of her  
     heart,  
 There is scarcely one of us knows it is  
     there ?

Or my father, the Earl, to whom life  
     is no more  
 Than a long procession of hound and  
     horse,  
 To whom hardly dishonour itself seems  
     worse  
 Than to weel out of one's degree ?

And I wandered out over the hill  
 For an hour of doubt or more,  
 And then, so it happened, my feet drew  
     near  
 To that humble cottage door ;  
 And I saw her come forth with a child  
     on her arm,  
 Pale-faced and hollow-eyed,  
 And she seemed a pagan goddess no  
     more,  
 But a fair Madonna, with all the charm  
 Of San Sisto or of the Chair.

And then, as over the hill  
 We walked back again, though her  
     voice was still,  
 Surely was never a man so full  
 Of chattering talk as I.  
 But she was not angry at all, not she ;  
 But from that calm vantage of wise  
     eighteen  
 And with only a modest word or so,  
 And a sweet voice, and musical accent  
     low,  
 She would bend her delicate ear to  
     me,  
 And listen, as grave and as calm as a  
     queen,  
 To the talk which meant little enough,  
     maybe,  
 But was understood, I ween.

But however it was, I know  
 When we came to the gate, and her  
     little hand

Slid shyly out, as she wished me good-  
bye,  
That as I turned to go  
My feet seemed winged on the slope  
of the hills,  
And I hardly knew that the cold half-  
sleet  
Which blots the clouded mountain and  
chills  
The unsheltered wayfarer, wrapping  
me round,  
Had drenched me. For up the silent  
street  
Of the darkling village, jubilant sound  
Compassed me; sunlight beamed on  
me still;  
And even to my high inn-chamber I  
seemed  
To be treading that breezy hill.

---

What is the charm that wakes  
The bud, the flower, the fruit, from the  
cold ground?  
What is the power that makes  
With song the groves, with song the  
fields, resound?  
One spell there is, so strong to move;  
Some call it Spring, and others Love.

I thought my heart lay dead—  
Sad heart, long buried deep in dusty  
lore!—  
But now, the winter fled,  
It beats with quicker beat than e'er  
before.—  
A simple girl, yet can she move  
Spring in my soul, the Spring of Love!

Strange fable that they taught  
Of old, of souls divided as in twain,

Each by the other sought  
Until the sundered reunite again,  
And then the severed members move,  
Knit by the magic spell of Love!

Ah, let us be at one,  
Dear soul, if one we be, and are of kin  
Before the world begun;  
Sure 'tis that I was made thy soul to  
win.  
Ah, child, if we might upward move,  
Borne on the golden wings of Love!

### SCENE III.

What is it the village leech  
Tells me of fever and chill,  
And bids me keep warm? Well, per-  
haps it were wise;  
For I fail to sleep, and my limbs are  
as lead,  
And a throb of painfulness splits my  
head,  
And they warned me of this, I re-  
member, again and again.  
But surely I know that, came wind or  
rain,  
If only my weary limbs could reach  
To that little gate on the breezy hill  
And I saw the desire of my eyes,  
I should take little thought of myself,  
not I,  
Not even were I doomed to die.

### SCENE IV.

What is this? And where am I?  
This is not the high inn-chamber, I  
know,  
This white little room where the sunset-  
glow  
On the white bed-curtains, as I lie,

Makes orange shadows which fade and  
fleet ;  
Nor are these my first nurse's reluctant  
feet  
Which steal so lightly and daintily  
round,  
As if grudging the faintest ghost of a  
sound ;  
Nor was the soft voice I heard  
Last night, when the curtain was  
silently stirred,  
The village doctor's at all :  
I have heard it before, but when, I  
cannot recall.

For there comes a sense on my brain  
Of time that is gone but has left no  
trace  
But days which passed and left nothing  
behind,  
Yet upon the secret depths of the mind  
Are graven that nought may erase.  
As the patient metal retains the sound  
Of the living voice that is dead,  
Even so doth my being retain  
A long procession of days and nights,  
Weary and suffering and heavily sped ;  
And then for a moment the cool air  
strikes,  
As some one carries me tenderly down,  
And slowly the wheels of my litter  
climb,  
Leaving the streets of the little town,  
Up the hill through the scented pines.

And then all is blank for a time ;  
A long time, surely, when nothing came  
But wandering dreams and a whispered  
name,  
Repeated often and like a charm,  
To keep off fancied phantoms of harm.  
"Gwen," was it? Somewhere I seem  
to recall,

Far away in some world of forgotten  
things,  
A fair young face which I loved to see ;  
And one night in this room it smiled on  
me,  
And the ghastly shapes spread their  
horrible wings  
And left me at rest for a while.

Ah, no ! I did not dream it at all,  
For now for a week she comes every  
day,  
A young nurse, virginal, white, and  
tall,  
And her father, the vicar, whose kind  
eyes beam  
With a genial kindness he cannot  
speak ;  
For if ever he ventures a word, it is gall  
To one who is peevish and weak,  
And his words struggle out like stones  
in a stream,  
Jerked together, and jostled, and bat-  
tered away,  
Till I long that he had done.

But she, my Artemis pure and fair,  
My Madonna, who stood at the cottage  
gate—  
She is perfect, I hold, from the crown  
of her hair  
To the dainty sole of her delicate foot ;  
And her hand and her voice are as soft  
as silk,  
And she comes hour by hour with a  
tender care,  
With my draught or my food, or with  
rich cool milk.  
Ah ! if only—— What, am I then  
worse than the brute,

That I stoop to thoughts that I loathe  
and hate—

I, a great peer's only son ?

For I see on the walls of my simple  
room,

Which I know was her own, the work  
of her hand,

At night, in the firelight's flickering  
gloom,

This text emblazoned in letters of  
gold—

"For whom Christ died." Ah, if  
indeed

His words were the words of a real  
doom,

And his faith the faith of a living  
creed !

But now souls and beliefs are bargained  
and sold,

There is no belief by which men may  
stand,

There is neither creed nor God !

But whether there be or be not indeed,  
It shall not change me or move my  
mind.

Shall I who hate to see weak things  
bleed,

From the hare which shrieks, to the  
trout on the hook,

Play false with the simple heart of a  
maid,

Till her poor soul pines with a terrible  
need ?

I dare not do it ; I am afraid

To see the young soul, with a hopeless  
look,

Go out for the truth which it cannot  
find

By dark ways, of truth untrod.

She shall keep unassailed her young  
innocent heart,

For aught to be whispered by me or  
done ;

She shall hold her faith ; but 'tis best  
we part,

For hearts break daily and white lives  
fade,

And 'twere better indeed I had never  
been born,

Than to bring a young life to sorrow  
and woe,

And leave a pure saint to the cold  
world's scorn,

Shrinking back from the wreck which  
myself had made.

No, of all the wrong-doing beneath the  
sun,

Not this one be mine, oh God !

White room ! white curtain ! little bed  
That once was hers, whereon she lay  
So warm and still, her sunny head  
Safe pillowed till the growing day !

I bless you and I love you all.  
I feel so young who once seemed old.  
I see a lithe girl-figure, tall,  
With grave blue eyes and hair of gold,

Stand by the half-closed door when he,  
The village doctor, yesternight,  
Came stealthily and looked on me,  
With noiseless step and shaded light ;

And I, who deep in lethargy  
Seemed buried, to a careless eye,  
Lay all unmoved, till suddenly  
I caught the echo of a sigh,

And, looking up, beheld my dear,  
The first love of my weary heart,  
Stand pitiful, and marked the tear  
In the soft eye unbidden start.

Yet no prognostics dire they were  
He launched against me; only these:  
Torpor and weakness, needing care  
And watchfulness for remedies;

And, seeing that I saw and heard,  
Turned to me with a cheerful face,  
And spoke some random hopeful word,  
And nodded smiling to the place,

Where stood the stair. But I, I knew  
A sudden rush of hope and strength,  
And cared not when, if but at length,  
My new-born thought should turn out  
true.

---

SCENE V.

Oh, joy! I grow stronger day by day;  
And day by day in the sweet summer  
weather  
I wander over the hills, and away  
High up 'mid the purple masses of  
heather,  
'Till mounting aloft with no one by,  
All in the bountiful summer weather,  
I drink in new life from every pore,  
Throbbing and burgeoning more and  
more  
In every limb and with every breath,  
As, laid on the heather, I watch the  
sky  
And the purple shadows on sea and  
hill,  
And hear no sound but the bee's deep  
hum.

And watch the shy mountain-sheep  
timidly come,  
And the kestrel circling, aloft on the  
rocky brow,  
Fulfilling the marvellous mission of  
Death and of Pain.  
Death! ah, but that is far from me  
now,  
Vanished with Pain and its legions of  
Ill.  
I can walk with my limbs, I can leap,  
I can run;  
I rejoice in my strength: the day of  
weakness is done.  
I live, I grow strong; I am one with  
the World and with Life again.

And sometimes, rare blessing, there  
comes with me  
A fair young Mountain-nymph over the  
hill,  
Fearless and free from a thought of  
ill.  
For her mother, who came of gentler  
blood,  
Who was always delicate, kind, and  
good—  
Her mother died long ago, and she  
Has lived from her childhood fearless  
and free.  
I think no touch of passion as yet  
Has moved her. Only pity made wet  
Her eyes on that night which awoke  
my love.  
I am only a friend more mature and  
wise  
Than any she knows, and a shamed  
surprise  
Would wake in the sapphire depths of  
her eyes,  
If she saw what blind and passionate  
longings move  
Within the hidden thoughts of a man.



Ah, well ! but nature is twofold, and sure  
It were not wise to ban  
The instincts which are neither gross  
nor pure.

Let him suppress them who can.

It is only in thought I invade her  
virginal peace,

For I know that this sweet rehearsal  
of love must cease,

For I am not my own ; but my wife  
to be,

Stately and beautiful, waits for me  
With that which suffices to build up  
our shattered wealth.

Ay, but what if love, awaking and  
coming by stealth,

Should bind me in chains on this wild  
Welsh hill ?

Or hurry me downward, downward, to  
fathomless ill ?

Tush ! how should I be a devil if there  
be not a God ?

I am only a young man in whom the  
young blood

Pulses quickly, and have I no gratitude  
For the life which she saved, the life  
which is grown so sweet,

As we roam o'er these breeze-swept  
uplands with rapid young feet ?

Oh, joy ! I am one with the life of the  
hills, and the skies, and of man !

#### SCENE VI.

It is done ! I have told her I love her,  
Yester-eve as we walked together,  
Some power grown tyrannous holding  
me fast,

Blotting alike the Future and Past ;  
And for answer she gave but a sigh  
and a start,

And a blush as bright as the purple  
heather,

And a little flutter of bosom and heart,  
And a glow like the hues of the sunset  
above her.

Oh, fair ash-grove where I told my  
love !

Fair ash-grove dear to Cymric verse ✓  
Since their bard who sang thee when  
Chaucer was young !

Fairest of groves that were ever sung !  
Oh, fairest sunset of all that have shone  
Since man first woke in Paradise  
garden,

Before the temptation, the ruin, the  
curse,

Before the strange story was over and  
done,

And man an outcast hopeless of pardon !  
As we sat on the mossy bank, she and I,  
And no creature was near with intrusive  
eye,

To mark our innocent joy !  
Sweet day when love awakens and  
stands,

With his free limbs bare and his out-  
stretched hands,

Before two young shame-fast natures  
which yearn

With innocent yearning : clear fires  
that burn

Free from all baser alloy.

It is done ; it is over ; and never Eve.  
The mother of maidens who love and  
grieve,

Looked fairer than did Gwen,  
This peasant maiden, when first she  
heard

The one ineffable, passionate word  
Which stirs for ever the hearts of  
maidens and of men.

The bud on the bough,  
 The song of the bird,  
 The blue river-reaches -  
 By soft breezes stirred ;  
 Oh, soul, and hast thou found again  
     thy treasure ?  
 Oh, world, and art thou once more filled  
     with pleasure ?  
 Oh, world, hast thou passed  
 Thy sad winter again ?  
 Oh, soul, hast thou cast  
 Thy dull vesture of pain ?  
 Oh ! winter, sad wert thou and full of  
     sorrow ;  
 Oh soul, oh world, the summer comes  
     to-morrow !

Oh, soul ! 'tis love quickens  
 Time's languorous feet ;  
 Oh, world ! 'tis Spring wakens  
 Thy fair blossoms sweet ;  
 Fair world, fair soul, that lie so close  
     together,  
 Each with sad wintry days and fair  
     Spring weather !

As on the clear hill-sides we walked  
     together,  
 A gleam of purple passed over the sea,  
 And, glad with the joy of the summer  
     weather,  
 My love turned quickly and looked on  
     me.  
 Ah, the glad summer weather, the fair  
     summer weather !  
 Ah, the purple shadow on hill and sea !

And I looked in her eyes as we walked  
     together,  
 And knew the shy secret she fain would  
     hide,

And we went hand in hand through the  
     blossoming heather,  
 She who now was my sweetheart, and  
     I by her side ;  
 For the shade was the shadow of Love's  
     wing-feather,  
 Which bares, as he rises, the secrets we  
     hide.

Now, come cloud or sunshine, come  
     joy or weeping,  
 It can be no longer as 'twas before.  
 Just a shadow of change o'er the soul  
     comes creeping,  
 And farewell to the joyance and freedom  
     of yore ;  
 For it crosses Love's face, where he  
     lies a-sleeping,  
 And he soars awaking, nor slumbers  
     more.

I have found her !  
 At last, after long wanderings, dull  
     delays,  
 I have found her ;  
 And all my life is tuned to joy and  
     praise.

I have found her !

A myriad-myriad times  
 In man's long history this thing has  
     been ;  
 All ages, climes,  
 This daily, hourly miracle have seen  
 A myriad-myriad times ;

Yet is it new to-day.  
 I have found her, and a new Spring  
     glads my eyes.  
 World, fair and gay

As when Eve woke in dewy Paradise,  
Fade not away !

Fade not, oh light,  
Lighting the eyes of yet another pair,  
But let my sight  
Find her as I have found her, pure and  
fair !  
Shine, mystic light !

Yes, it is sweet to be  
Awaited, and to know another heart  
Beats faster for our coming, and to see  
The blush unbidden start  
To the fair cheek, and mark young  
Love's alarms  
Perturb and make more fair the girlish  
charms.

I am once more  
A young man with the passions of my  
kind ;  
I am no pedant, glorying as before  
In barren realms of mind.  
The springtide that awakens land and  
sea,  
The Spring of Youth and Love,  
awakens me.

It calls, and all my life  
Answers from its dim depths, "I come,  
I hear."  
It breaks, it bursts, in sudden hope and  
strife,  
And precious chills of fear.  
It comes with tremulous, furtive thrills  
which can  
Strip from me all the Past, and leave  
me, man.

# SCENE VII.—GWEN.

Dear hills, dear vales, so calm and  
bright  
In dewy dawn, in silvery night !  
Dear woods and uplands cool and wild,  
Where yesterday I walked a child,  
I love you, but I roam no more  
With all the careless joy of yore.  
My girlish days are past and done ;  
I know my womanhood begun.

What was it one so wise could see  
In an untutored child like me ?  
What was it ? Nay, 'twere sin to  
prove  
By earthy tests the ways of love.  
Whate'er it was, Love's perfect way  
Is without doubting to obey.

I do obey. I lay my soul  
Low at Love's feet for his control.  
Farewell, oh paths half hidden in  
flowers,  
Trodden by young feet in childish  
hours ;  
White bed, white room, and girlish  
home !  
The hour of Love and Life is come !

I shall not watch as yesterday  
The orange sunset fade to gray,  
Nor roam unfettered as the bee,  
A maiden heart and fancy free.  
I am bound by such a precious chain  
I may not wander forth again.

Oh, bond divine ! oh, sweet, sweet  
chain !

Oh, mingling of ecstatic pain !  
I am a simple girl no more.  
I would not have it as before.

One day of love, one brief, sweet day,  
And all my past is swept away.

---

Oh, vermeil rose and sweet,  
Rose with the golden heart of hidden  
fire,  
Bear thou my yearning soul to him I  
love,  
Bear thou my longing and desire.

Glide safe, oh sweet, sweet rose,  
By fairy-fall and cliff and mimic strand,  
To where he muses by the sleeping  
stream,  
Then eddy to his hand.

Drown not, oh vermeil rose,  
But from thy dewy petals let a tear  
Fall soft for joy when thou shalt know  
the touch  
And presence of my dear.

Tell him, oh sweet, sweet rose,  
That I grow fixed no more, nor flourish  
now  
In the sweet maiden garden-ground of  
old,  
But severed even as thou.

Say from thy golden heart,  
From virgin folded leaf and odorous  
breath,  
That I am his to wear or cast away,  
His own in life or death.

---

Thy shadow, oh tardy night,  
Creeps onward by valley and hill,  
And scarce to my straining sight  
Show the white road-reaches still.

Oh, night, stay now a little, little space,  
And let me see the light of my beloved's  
face !

My love is late, oh night,  
And what has kept him away ?  
For I know that he takes not delight  
In the garish joys of day.  
Haste, night, dear night, and bring my  
love to me !  
What if his footsteps halt and tarry but  
for thee ?

Nay, what if his footsteps slide  
By the swaying bridge of pine,  
And whirled seaward by the tide  
Is the loved form I counted mine !  
Oh, night, dear night that comest yet  
dost not come,  
How shall I wait the hour that brings  
my darling home ?

---

Fair star that on the shoulder of yon  
hill  
Peepest, a little eye of tranquil night,  
Come forth. Nor sun nor moon there  
is to kill  
Thy ray with broader light.  
Shine, star of eve that art so bright and  
clear ;  
Shine, little star, and bring my lover  
here !

My lover ! oh, fair word for maid to  
hear !  
My lover who was yesterday my friend !  
Oh, strange we did not know before  
how near  
Our stream of life smoothed to its fated  
end !

Shine, star of eve, as Love's self, bright  
and clear ;  
Shine, little star, and bring my lover  
here !

He comes ! I hear the echo of his feet.  
He comes ! I fear to stay, I cannot go.  
Oh, Love, that thou art shame-fast,  
bitter-sweet,  
Mixed with all pain, and conversant  
with woe !  
Shine, star of eve, more bright as night  
draws near ;  
Shine, little star, and bring my lover  
here !

What shall I do for my love,  
Who is so tender  
And dear and true,  
Loving and true and tender,  
My strength and my defender --  
What shall I do ?

I will cleave unto my love,  
Who am too lowly  
For him to take.  
With a self-surrender holy  
I will cleave unto him solely ;  
I will give my being wholly  
For his dear sake.

## ACT II.

### SCENE I. — HENRY.

Only a little week  
Of meetings under the star,  
Since the blissful evening I dared to  
speak,  
Sweet evening that seems so far !  
And already the cruel post brings me  
word

That my mother the countess, who, far  
away  
At a German bath with her ailing lord,  
Has been dreaming the early autumn  
away,  
Returns to-day, and to-morrow will  
come  
To take the invalid leisurely home.

Ah, mother ! I fear that your pride will  
scorn  
That your son should mate with a lowly  
bride,  
Though a vicar's daughter is well  
enough born  
For all but a foolish pride.  
And I know, moreover, your heart is  
set

On her to whom no word is spoken yet,  
The lofty heiress who comes to restore  
Our house to the splendours of yore.  
Poor mother, your patience was sadly  
tried  
By the studious fancies which kept me  
apart  
From the London which now seems to  
hold your heart ;  
And, alas ! I hardly know how to face  
The blank amaze of your haughty gaze,  
The cold surprise of patrician eyes,  
As you listen to my disgrace.

Disgrace, did I say ? Ah ! where  
In all the bewildering town  
Is any as Gwen is, fair  
Or comely, or high or pure ?  
Or when did a countess's coronet crown  
A head with a brighter glory of hair ?  
Or how could titular rank insure  
A mind and a heart so sweet ?  
They shall not shame me to cheat or  
beguile  
My darling, my queen, my treasure,

Nor blot from my soul the pure pleasure  
Of the brief hours that have been.  
And if indeed I must go for a while,  
It shall not be for long, but a little  
while ;  
And then I will haste back again with  
passionate feet,  
To bask again in her smile.  
I must tell her all to-night, sweet to-  
night, when we meet.

---

SCENE II.

I have seen her once again,  
I have seen her again, my dear.  
And oh, but parting was a bitter pain !  
And oh, the ready, child-like tear !  
I did not know, even I, before,  
With how immense and ponderous a  
chain  
Love binds the girlish heart, and holds  
it evermore.

For I hardly know at all  
How it came to be, but as we two spoke  
Of parting and absence her sweet voice  
broke,  
And she paled and wavered as if to fall ;  
And 'twas only a ready encircling arm,  
And lip to lip in a close embrace,  
That brought back ' the rose to her  
troubled face,  
And recalled the wandering life from  
its swift alarm.  
Dear young soul that Fate has given  
me to hold,  
And shall I forsake thee, come weal or  
woe ?  
No, I will not betray thy sweet trustful-  
ness ; no,  
Not for millions of gems and gold.

But before I left her and went  
My way to the inn, while the village  
street  
Echoed loud with the rhythmical wheels  
and feet  
Of my mother's chariot, we vowed  
together  
That, through every change of life's  
fickle weather,  
We would cling to each other and never  
part.  
And so I, the round of festivities done,  
And the pheasants killed and the county  
won,  
Will steal from my gilded trammels, and  
come  
To the Welsh hillside which is now my  
home,  
And the child who has my heart.

---

Was ever a girlish heart so fair  
As Gwen's, or free from earth ?  
She is pure and innocent, I swear,  
As an infant at the birth.  
She is full, indeed, of much old-world  
lore,  
From the lessons her mother taught her  
of yore ;  
Mozart's sweet melodies loves to re-  
hearse,  
And many a tome of forgotten verse ;  
And something of modern letters she  
knows,  
And oft in fancy with Elaine goes,  
As she floats down lifeless to Camelot.  
But of wrong and evil she knows no  
jot.  
She dreams no more of the ways of  
men,  
Their deceits, their treacheries,

Or of coarse, bold women,—my little  
 Gwen,  
 With the clear, deep, trusting eyes—  
 Than if you should come by some  
 Arctic main,  
 Where a world of ice shuts humanity  
 out ;  
 On some simple forgotten colony,  
 Which had never heard of the world or  
 wealth ;  
 Or a convent set on a scarpèd hill.  
 Tush ! but they would corrupt each  
 other, no doubt,  
 Or some echo of evil would creep in by  
 stealth.  
 But for Gwen the pure cold stream of  
 her will  
 Flows along the mountain-side, taking  
 no stain,  
 Crystal-clear, reflecting its kindred sky.  
 Was ever a soul so fair ?

---

Forget me not, dear soul ! Yet where-  
 fore speak  
 The words of freedom, where the thing  
 is not ?  
 Forget me not ! And yet how poor  
 and weak  
 My prayer, who know that nothing is  
 forgot !  
 Low voice, or kindling eye, or glowing  
 cheek,  
 Forget them not !

Forget me only if forgetting prove  
 Oblivion of low aims and earthy  
 thought ;  
 Forget the blinder appetites which  
 move

Through secret ways, by lower nature  
 taught ;  
 Forget them, love !

Remember only, with fond memory,  
 The exaltation, the awakened soul,  
 Swift moments strong to bind my heart  
 to thee,  
 Strong tides of passionate faith which  
 scorn control—  
 In these remember me !

---

Dear child so sweet in maidenhood,  
 How should I doubt, regarding thee,  
 A secret spring of hidden Good,  
 Which rules all things and bids them  
 be ?

Dear soul, so guileless and so pure,  
 So innocent and free from stain,  
 As 'twere untempted Eve again,  
 I lean upon thee and grow sure.

I love no more the barren quest,  
 The doubt I cherished I despise ;  
 I am a little while at rest,  
 Seeing the Godhead in thine eyes.

Can good be, yet no Giver ? Can  
 The stream flow on, yet own no  
 source ?  
 From what deep well of hidden Force  
 Flows the diviner stream in man ?

I know not. Some there is, 'tis clear,  
 A mystery of mysteries.  
 Thy youth has gazed upon it, dear,  
 And bears its image in thine eyes.

Yes, God there is. Too far to know,  
 It may be, yet directing all.

It is enough ; we ~~rising~~, we grow,  
We ripen, we decay, we fall,

To a great Will. No empty show  
Of aimless and unmeaning ends  
Our life is, but the overflow  
Of a great Spring which always tends

To a great Deep. The silver thread  
Between the Fountain and the Sea  
We are for ever, quick or dead,  
And Source and Ending both are He.

It is enough—no more I know ;  
But maybe from thy faithful eyes,  
Thy trust that knows no chill, thy glow  
Of meek and daily sacrifice,

I may relearn the legend fair  
I whispered at my mother's knee,  
And seeing Godhead everywhere,  
Confess, " And this man too was He."

---

SCENE III.—GWEN.

Oh, happy days so lately done,  
And yet removed so far away  
Before our passion-tide begun  
And life's young May !  
Shy early days of sun and showers,  
When all the paths were hidden in  
flowers  
Tender and sweet,  
And on the mountain-side the year,  
With girlish change of smile and tear,  
Tripped with light feet ;  
And by the melting snows the violet  
came,  
And on the wolds the crocus like a  
saffron flame !

Daily some song of lonely bird,  
By tufted field or tasselled grove,  
From the clear dawn to solemn eve  
was heard,

But few of love.

Nay, rather virginal flutings pure and  
clear,

Passionless preludes, ah, how dear !

Nor yet upon the nest,

The bright-eyed fearless mother sate,

Nor yet high in mid-heaven her soaring  
mate

Thrilled his full breast,

Nor yet within the white domain of  
song

Love burst with eyes aglow the maiden  
choir among.

But when the fuller summer shone,

Soon as the perfumed rose had come,

Lo, all the reign of song was done,

The birds all dumb ;

And for the choir which did before  
rejoice,

Low, tuneless accents of an anxious  
voice

Weighed down with care,

And dim forebodings choking the high  
note

Which once resounded from the joyous  
throat

So full and fair.

I would not lose the love which is so  
dear,

But 'tis oh the parted days of the im-  
perfect year !

---

Oh, soft dove gently cooing

To thy mate upon her nest,

And hast thou known undoing

And deep unrest ?



Hath any pain of wooing  
Pierced thy soft breast?

Oh, pale flower ever turning  
To thy great lord the Sun,  
And dost thou know a yearning  
Which is never done,  
For cloudless days returning  
And June begun?

Ah, heart! there is no pleasure  
As thine, nor grief.  
Time Future holds the treasure;  
Time Past, the thief.  
What power brings this one, measure,  
Or that, relief?

---

Ah! 'tis not very long  
Since I was light and free,  
And of all the burden of pain and  
wrong  
No echo reached to me;  
But day by day, upon this breeze-swept  
hill,  
Far from the too great load of human  
ill,  
I lived within the sober walls of home,  
Safe-set, nor heard a sound of outward  
evil come.

It is not that I know,  
By word or any deed,  
What depths of misery lie below,  
What hearts that bleed;  
But, since I have felt the music of my  
soul  
Touched by another's mastering hand,  
I seem to hear unfathomed oceans roll,  
As when a child I saw the Atlantic  
lash the strand.

Oh, mother, who ~~art~~ dead  
So long beneath the grass,  
Lift up once more, lift thy beloved  
head

When we two pass,  
And tell me—tell me if this passionate  
pain,

This longing, this ineffable desire  
For one I know so lately, be the gain  
To which young maids aspire.

Is this to love, to kiss my chain and  
feel

A dominant will to which 'tis joy to  
kneel?

Oh, mother, I am a maid;  
I am young, I know not men.  
My great joy makes me shrink and be  
afraid.

It is not now as then  
When first we walked together on the  
hill.

I take no longer, thought for any soul  
Of those I loved before and cherish  
still;

I care not for the poor, the blind, the  
lame;

I care not for the organ's solemn roll,  
(Or sabbath hymns and prayers, who  
am burnt as of a flame.

---

Nay, love! how can I doubt thee  
Who art so dear,  
Though I pine away without thee  
In the fading year?  
The ash flings down its leaf, the  
heather

Is bloomless in the autumn weather;  
The mountain paths are wet with rime,  
Where we together eve by eve  
Would wander in the joyous time,

Fair hours when thy returning strength  
Came with the days' increasing length.  
I pace alone the dear familiar road  
Where first we met. I walk alone ;  
I have no aim nor purpose, none—  
Only to think of those soft days and  
still believe.

Last evening, on a distant hill,  
A wreath of cloud-mist dealing sleet  
Compassed my homeward steps, as still  
I toiled with weary feet.  
Oh, what if the snow, like a winding-  
sheet,  
Had stayed the steps of my life and my  
troubled will,  
And closed on me for ever, concluding  
there  
My little hopes and joys, and maybe  
my despair !

Nay, I will not doubt him nor be  
afraid ;  
He is all that is good, I know it, tender  
and true.  
But I fear he is higher in rank than he  
said ;  
For one day, I remember it well, as he  
lay  
Very weak on his bed, a letter came  
Coronet-blazoned, and half in shame  
I lifted my eyes, and he saw I knew,  
And his face grew troubled and never  
more  
Was his gaze as frank as it was before.  
Tender it was, indeed, and ardent and  
true,  
But not as frank as before.

But I count the days till he comes  
again ;  
I long for him with a dull, deep pain.

I will do whatever thing my love  
commands ;  
I will go or stay ; I am taken as a bird  
in his hands.  
Oh, love, my love ! tarry not long ;  
I am not happy nor strong.

Delay not, love ; the sun has lost his  
fire.  
Stay not ; the cold earth loses warmth  
and light.  
Summer is dead, and Winter comes to  
blight  
The waiting world's desire.

Come back, and coming bring back  
Spring with thee,  
Spring for my heart though all the  
world lie dead ;  
My life will burst in blossom at thy  
tread—  
Oh, love, come back to me !

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—HENRY.

Once more upon these dear familiar  
hills  
I tread ; 'tis autumn now, 'twas summer  
then.  
The valley paths are deep in mire ; the  
leaf  
Falls sadly from the bough ; the village  
inn,  
So noisy then, when four months since  
I lay.  
'Twixt life and death, is silent ; a gray  
mist  
Hangs o'er the breathless lowland. All  
the hills

Are clouded, on whose summits a thin  
cowl  
Of snowflakes sits at times. Summer  
is dead ;  
A sad autumnal stillness over all  
The dull world broods, and in my heart  
I know  
Summer is dead—sweet summer, ah,  
too brief !

---

For now, alas ! I know  
What folly 'twas that kept me here  
Three little months ago.  
I have drunk deep since then of cups  
that cheer,  
The sea of eyes, the beat of popular  
hands,  
When to his thought the high-set plat-  
form reels,  
As now the solitary speaker stands  
Poised like a swimmer on high waves,  
who feels  
The world cut off from him and knows  
To fail is ruin. I have known  
Men better since, and felt how near  
And yet far off are clown and peer ;  
And known how better than all lore,  
Better than love itself, and more,  
How satisfying and how great,  
It is to aid the ship of state,  
The labouring bark, which reeling goes  
'Mid sunken rocks, and watching foes.  
And best of all I know  
How baseless was my sweet Arcadian  
dream.  
I could not bear—I know it well—  
To live retired from the central stream  
Of life, as if in a hermit's cell.  
I long for the hurry, the passion, the  
glow

Of full life lived in the eyes of men ;  
I can bear no longer to dream in  
inglorious ease.  
A great name, the voice of the people,  
authority, these  
Are more than my simple Gwen.

Ay, and I have learnt besides,  
What I scarce suspected before,  
By what poor expedients my father has  
striven

To keep the wolf from his door—  
Bubble schemes, mine-ventures which  
came to nought,  
And some senseless bet on some  
swindling race,  
And I know not what gambling-follies  
beside.

But I know that our lawyer, with long-  
drawn face,  
Came to me with secret warnings of ill,  
And hints that a prudent marriage  
alone could fill

The coffers so nearly empty, again.  
Poor father ! it was not right, for your  
dreams of gain,  
And your pompous life and wasteful,  
orderless state,

To diminish a family hoard that was  
never great ;  
But I know that if the blow he hinted  
should come,

And the Jew and the broker harried  
our ancient home,  
It would kill you and drive my mother  
distraught.

Nay, I could not bear to see it. My  
path is clear :

I must see you once more and leave  
you, my love, my dear.

## SCENE II.

I did not know it, I swear ; -  
 I did not dream that a young girl, fair  
     and free,  
 Could long care for one grave and  
     studious and worn like me.  
 I thought our brief passion was dead ;  
 I thought I had schooled my heart to  
     obey my head ;  
 But when I saw her, she showed so  
     fair, —  
 It was just at the self-same spot where  
     we used to meet, —  
 That I hastened up the steep path with  
     wings to my feet ;  
 And she did not see me at first, but  
     stood for a while  
 Silent and musing and still, with a sweet  
     half-smile,  
 As if bent on some mingled vision of  
     joy and pain,  
 And I knew that our love was not  
     dead, but slept and awoke again.

But when at length she turned her  
     eyes,  
 With a beautiful, pitiful look of sur-  
     prise,  
 And a questing glance, and a shiver  
     and a start,  
 Oh, 'twas then that she touched my  
     heart !  
 And before a moment passes again we  
     stand,  
 With eyes on each other bent, and  
     hand linked to hand ;  
 And with hardly a spoken word, we  
     are face to face,  
 Strained together again in a close  
     embrace ;

And I failed, I failed to tell her what  
     should have been told,  
 For the heart of a maid is higher than  
     rank or gold.

But to-night I must speak and tell her  
     all,  
 I must tell her though the sky fall.

## SCENE III.

It is over, it is done.  
 She from the clear frank depths of her  
     maidenly pride :  
 " Dear, it is sudden indeed, but I  
     thought it would come,  
 For I doubt if any are happy under the  
     sun.  
 But you, you shall not imperil the pride  
     of your home ;  
 I know you a fitting mate for a loftier  
     bride.  
 I will love you and pray for you always.  
     And now good-bye.  
 Be good, my dear, to your wife. But I  
 Have awoke from my dream in time,  
     and will tend  
 My poor, who, I fear, have missed a  
     friend ;  
 And my father is growing old, and will  
     want me here.  
 Fear not, I shall not be unhappy.  
     Farewell, my dear !"  
 And she went with feet as swift as the  
     bounding roe,  
 And vanished before I knew she was  
     minded to go,  
 And left me alone with the dying day  
     in the fading year.

I cannot leave her thus ; I must see her  
 again,  
 Though I know it is cruel to both and  
 renewal of pain.  
 But all night long have I lain awake,  
 Tossing and fevered for her dear sake,  
 As when she nursed me to life in her  
 little room ;  
 And once, when I dozed a moment, I  
 seemed to hear  
 Her sweet voice calling aloud in accents  
 of fear,  
 Calling my name in a voice which sank  
 to a moan ;  
 And, though I know it was dreaming  
 fancy alone,  
 I cannot leave her thus. I am harassed  
 with fears ;  
 I must see her again ; I must write.  
 And lo ! through the gloom  
 The slow dawn of autumn breaks in  
 mist and in tears.

---

Dear, I must see you again.  
 Bring with you the last sweet rose  
 Which lingers still in your garden-  
 ground,  
 The last red summer rose.

Do you mind how you sent me a rose  
 Along the swift streamlet's flow,  
 A sweet and a blushing rose ?  
 It is faded—'twas long ago.

Come, dear. A dream visited me  
 In the weary vigil of night ;  
 I heard your voice calling to me  
 In grievous pain and affright.

I must see you. The swift wheels stay  
 At the spot we have known of yore ;

Be there, ere they bear me away  
 From my love for evermore.

#### SCENE IV.—GWEN.

The light has gone out of my life,  
 Yet I will not repine.  
 Nay, 'tis well to have passed betimes  
 through the struggle and strife.

Shall I grieve that he comes not again,  
 That my love is not mine ?  
 Ah, folly ! the whole creation travails  
 in pain.

I will live my own life once more ;  
 I will succour the weak ;  
 I will be but a little more grave than I  
 was before.

I will strive to repay the deep love  
 My fond father fails to speak ;  
 Though the path may be lonely and  
 drear, yet the heavens are above.

Ah ! my love who no longer art mine,  
 Yet my love till I die,  
 I will strive to be patient and strong,  
 but I wither and pine.

---

A letter from my love,  
 In the well-remembered hand,  
 Once again, yet we have parted ;  
 'Tis hard to understand.

A letter from my love !  
 Dear letter, and what says he ?  
 " I am going away for ever.  
 Come once more, dear to me,

"And with you bring a rose."—  
My love, I will be there ;  
I will bring you a red, red rosebud  
Upon your heart to wear.

But you must not crush it, dear,  
Or bind it to you too fast,  
Or the poor flower's scent, I fear,  
Will bring back to you the Past.

Wear your rose lightly, dear,  
For ornament or pleasure ;  
But the virgin rose of a maiden's heart  
Keep safe as a precious treasure.

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—HENRY.

How weak are we and blind !  
How ignorant of fate !  
For I thought I was steadfast and firm,  
and knew my mind,  
Till I saw her at the gate ;  
And next day, as soon as the train rolled  
on and I sat alone,  
I wished that I had not written to give  
her pain,  
And I prayed that she might not come,  
nor might I see her again.

But when the swift wheels slackened  
and grew still  
At the little wayside station beyond the  
hill,  
There alone by the platform stood my  
treasure, my dear,  
Very pale, with a rose in her hand ; full  
of maidenly fear.  
And I sprang out to her, and we  
whispered ardent and low,

With sad hearts throbbing together and  
cheeks aglow,  
For a precious minute or two, till the  
signal to go ;  
And then, all my youth and my love  
rising up like a flame,  
I whispered, "I cannot leave you, my  
love, my bride.  
Come to me, my own, my wife !"

And lo ! as in a trance,  
With a shiver and tottering limbs, and  
a pitiful glance,  
As one who walked in a dream, she  
obeyed and came  
Constrained, and sank fainting down in  
her place at my side.

There she lay long time on my breast,  
very pale and chill,  
And I trembled to see her poor white  
face, my dear ;  
And the swift train had sped us on far,  
when, with something of fear,  
She said quickly, "Where am I ?"  
And I : "With your husband to  
be.  
We are long miles away from your  
home. You will trust me, my  
own ?"

And she moaned, "Ah ! how could I  
leave my father alone ?  
Poor father ! Ah ! what will they think  
of me when they know ?  
They will deem me unmaidenly—bold.  
Let me go. We were mad ;  
It is nothing to women to wither and  
pine and be sad.  
Let me go. It is better. Some weak-  
ness constrained me to come.  
I will go and be happy, fear not, with  
my equals at home."  
But I soothed her, and flashed a mes-  
sage that all was well,

And to promise a letter next day, telling  
all that there was to tell ;  
And she lay like a child on my heart,  
with her head bent wearily down,  
And lo ! on the autumn twilight, the  
glare and the turmoil of town.

---

I hold him wrong who opens wide  
The secret, sacred doors of love,  
The paths by shame-fast footsteps tried,  
The mazes of the enchanted grove.

I hold him wrong ; but Gwen the wife  
Is dearer far than Gwen the maid.  
We walk by hidden deeps of life,  
And no man maketh us afraid.

I hold him wrong ; but who can prize  
At its full worth the love he gains,  
Till bound by mutual sacrifice,  
Till fused by mutual joys and pains ?

Too happy are the halcyon days ;  
For Time the taker, Time the thief,  
Steals ghostlike down the flowery ways,  
And makes the blessed moments brief.

---

I have left her oft-times for a while,  
And then, on some pretext hastily  
found,  
Have hurried back to bask in her  
smile ;  
But now I am here fast bound,  
For my father is failing, day by day,  
And 'tis hard to keep the harpies at  
bay,  
Who would enter and drive him from  
house and home.

They must not suspect that I, who am  
alone  
The mainstay on which they depend to  
secure their own,  
Am not the lover of one who brings  
lands and wealth,  
But bound to a penniless girl whom I  
wedded by stealth ;  
They must not dream it ; and therefore  
here must I stay,  
Though I seem indeed to lose every  
day  
That keeps me away from my love.  
Dear soul, it is springtime again, and  
fresh currents move  
Through the world, and stir the life in  
blossom and tree,  
And the little hidden life which ere  
long shall be.

---

SCENE II.—GWEN.

Dear love, I will be patient, yet  
I long to see you, and I fear  
Lest absence lead you to forget  
The things that once were dear.

You tell me we awhile must hide  
Our union safe from prying eyes,  
But when your ailing father dies  
You will proclaim me as your bride.

I long that this might be, nor wait  
The death of any. I have been  
These last six months, 'spite love and  
fate,  
Dearest, as happy as a queen.

But now another dearer life  
Forbids my careless patience more.

Pray God it may not come before  
I am acknowledged as your wife.

---

I did not know,  
When I walked careless on the hills,  
The hopeless load of human ills ;  
But neither could I know  
To what full height our happiness can  
grow.

Sing, caged bird, sing !  
Is this your constant strain ?  
" I would, I would that I were free ;  
I would, I would, I would that I were  
once again  
Sitting alone within a leafy tree ;  
I would that I might be  
Breathing free air far from this gilded  
pain."

---

Ah, bird ! I would be free  
As you, for I weary here.  
And yet, my bird, I have one so dear,  
so dear,  
That, if he might only bide with me,  
I should no longer care  
To change this stifling, fettered air  
For the free mountain-breathings fresh  
and fair.

---

Cold east and drear,  
Thy chill breath veils the world in  
cheerless gray.  
Sad east, while thou art here,  
Life creeps with halting feet its weary  
way.  
I feel you pierce my heart, oh, cold  
east wind !  
Sad east ! that leavest lifeless plains  
behind.

The dull earth, watching, sleeps  
Within her leafless bowers,  
Until the west wind coming weeps  
Soft tears that turn to flowers.  
Oh, cruel east ! that dost delay the  
world,  
Withering the leaf of hope while yet  
unfurled.

Over this gray cheerless town  
The stifling smoke-mist hangs, a squalid  
pall,  
And night, too swift for springtide,  
settles down  
Before the shades of mountain-evenings  
fall.  
I sicken here alone, dull day by day,  
To watch the turmoil wake and fade  
away.

Why does my dear not come,  
Or write or send some little loving  
word ?  
It is not here as 'twas at home.  
I have no companion but this prisoned  
bird ;  
No friend in all the throng to hear my  
sighs ;  
No glance, but the cold stare of alien  
eyes.

No friend, nor love nor care  
To hold me ; but when summer suns  
return  
And wake this stagnant and exhausted  
air,  
The little dearer life for which I yearn  
May wake, and make me happier than  
of old,  
Watching the innocent life my arms  
enfold.



Cold east and drear,  
 Spreading a noontide darkness on the  
     town.  
 You shall not blight my faith, nor  
     make me fear,  
 Nor leave me in despond, nor drag me  
     down.  
 I am alone ; but, if he loves me still,  
 I am not all alone, sad days and chill.

---

SCENE III.

I grieve that my father stays away,  
 Though his letters are always dear and  
     kind,  
 But sometimes I think they seem to  
     convey  
 Some shadow of pain on a doubtful  
     mind ;  
 But he does not know that I am alone,  
 For I could not tell him my dear was  
     gone,  
 And it may be he has not forgiven quite  
 Our foolish and hurried flight.  
 What ? Do I not know—forgive, did  
     I say ?—  
 That nought which falls short of com-  
     mitted wrong  
 Would keep his heart from his child for  
     long,  
 Nought that a kiss would not chase  
     away ?  
 Dear father ! I would I might welcome  
     him here !  
 For, brooding here day by day,  
 My mind grows full of a formless fear,  
 And I dread the glance of the women ;  
     the sneer  
 Which I seem to see on their lips and eyes,  
 As they ask sometimes with a hard  
     surprise

If my husband is ailing ; he keeps  
     away—  
 And I have but faltering words to say.  
 And to-day I thought, as I sate in my  
     lonely room,  
 With a little frock on my lap, in the  
     gathering gloom,  
 And the woman came with the lights,  
     that she seemed to look  
 With the old respect no more, but a  
     cold rebuke.  
 Does she doubt, then, I am his wife ? I  
     will fly ; I will go ;  
 I will tell her all my secret. Ah, no !  
     ah, no !  
 Great Heaven, does she think he is  
     gone and will no more come ?  
 Oh, Henry, 'tis cruel to leave me, come  
     to me, come home !

---

SCENE IV.

This is the fourth dull week—  
 I am wretched and sick at heart—  
 Since the thought came first which I  
     fear to write or speak,  
 And I have no rest at night ; for I sud-  
     denly start,  
 Thinking I hear his voice calling to me  
     in pain,  
 Mixed with voices of scorn sometimes,  
     through the dead city-night ;  
 And then, if my tired eyes sink to  
     slumber again,  
 I wake in deadly fright.  
 And before the bustle of life revives in  
     the street,  
 I watch for the hurrying sound of the  
     messenger's feet,  
 And I hold my breath as he comes with  
     a sickening fear.

But the sharp summons passes on  
quickly, and never here  
He stays ; but I must not despair, nor  
ever forget  
That I live for a ripening life, which  
'twould injure to fret.

But I know that my face is pale and  
anxious and thin,  
Which my love would hardly know, if  
he saw me again ;  
And I look in the glass, and I start to  
see therein  
Two hollow eyes answer my gaze with  
a look of pain.  
And perhaps he would love me no  
more in my beauty's disgrace ;  
Perhaps he was only a slave to a foolish  
face ;  
Perhaps—— But I know I am sick in  
body and mind,  
Or I could not doubt my love, who was  
always kind.

---

My heart is heavy,  
My life runs low,  
My young blood's pulses  
Beat faint and slow.

I cannot believe,  
Yet I dare not doubt,  
For when faith is shadowed  
Love's fire goes out.

Oh, Love, what is this  
That thy strong power brings  
To those thou hast touched  
With thy vanishing wings ?

Oh, Love, it was cruel  
To bring us to pain.

I will hide me away  
From the cold world again.

I can stay here no longer ;  
Whatever may come,  
I will go to my father  
And—die at home.

My heart is heavy,  
My life runs slow ;  
To my Father in Heaven }  
I open my woe.

---

SCENE V.

What is it that has been ?  
Let me once recall again  
The fear that came upon me,  
And the story of my pain.

Yester-eve, as I sat alone,  
Somebody entered, and read  
How the Earl, at some foreign bath,  
Had been ailing and now was dead ;

And pointed to the place,  
And the letters seemed to swim,  
And the whole room whirling round  
and round,  
As my sight grew faint and dim.

For 'twas said that the new Earl,  
His mourning done, would wed  
The heiress of whom he told me before ;  
And I wished that I was dead.

And they muttered, with freezing  
glances,  
“ They had thought 'twas thus, before ; ”  
And I could not answer a single word  
But fell upon the floor.

And now I lie ailing and weak,  
Sick in body and mind and heart;  
But to-morrow, if God help me,  
I will rouse me and depart.

Oh, father, you will not spurn me,  
Nor think me what they say,  
But take us back to your heart and life,  
And my grief shall fade away.

SCENE VI.

Oh, the sweet air of the hills,  
That on this fair summer night  
Breathes on me as I 'scape at last  
From the glare of the long day,  
From the dust of the long plain,  
And the rushing, maddening train !

Here I mount among the pines  
By the path we knew so well.  
All is there unchanged but I.  
Hark ! the thunder of the fall.  
See the ash-grove where we sate.  
There we lingered at the gate.

Nothing changed, but I am changed.  
Slowly up the well-loved steep,  
Falling footsteps toiling slow,  
Where, upon the morning hills,  
Twelve months since my feet would go  
Bounding lightly as the roc.

None have seen me, that is well—  
Yet if here I were to fail—  
Courage ! I shall reach there—Nay,  
I must rest awhile ; then climb  
Slowly through the fragrant gloom,  
Where my garden roses bloom.—

It is finished. Dear white head  
Bending low upon thy book,

Homely lamp, familiar room,  
Ye will welcome me, I know.  
Open, father ; I am come  
Broken-hearted to my home !

ACT V.

SCENE I.—GWEN.

It is over now.  
I have been a long time ill,  
But to-day I am able to wander slow  
To the churchyard round the hill.  
'Tis there they have laid my little love,  
Who lingered three little months—it  
was not long —  
And there they will lay me too, ere the  
waning light grows strong.

It is but a little grave  
Where my little one is laid,  
But I keep it decked with white flowers  
every day,  
And above, a kindly yew's protecting  
shade  
Shelters it safe from rain and wind.  
Sleep fast, my darling, sleep while yet  
you may ;  
Your mother will not linger long behind.

Dear child, I wonder when  
The last great morning breaks and we  
shall wake,  
If I may bear you then  
Safe in my nursing arms for Him to  
take ;  
Or will He suffer you to come before,  
White soul, while I am waiting at the  
door?

Dear little grave, I strew  
Fresh autumn flowers and garden  
blooms on you ;

I strew upon you roses white and red ;  
I fling my heart upon you, narrow bed !

Once, twelve months since, I launched  
my heart, a rose,  
Where, lit with laughter, Love's sweet  
river goes,  
And lo ! once more the year's swift  
pinions move,  
And now I cast it on the grave of love.

My love, my self, my child,  
Lie buried here, and I am free again.  
I would I were a slave : I loved my  
chain.

I would that I might see your sweet  
eyes mild ;  
They were your father's eyes, who loves  
not me-----

I blame him not, but do forgive for  
thee.

It is not long I stay, my life, my dear,  
Not long until we are together here.

Last year---it seems an age ago---  
I had not seen him : then we went  
Together on our road ; and so,  
By ways and converse innocent,  
We gained at last the sacred gate  
Of wedlock, and the hand of Fate  
Lifted the latch, and we passed in  
To the enchanted ground therein.  
And now the winds of autumn rave,  
And love lies dead within a grave.

Dear love, that liest there so still,  
I go now till to-morrow's sun ;  
The autumn evening gathers chill,  
The day is well-nigh done.  
Sleep, dear, through all thy long un-  
troubled night,  
Sleep calmly till the Light !

## SCENE II.

What ? Can a second springtide burst,  
As happy as the first,  
From out the midst of dark autumnal  
days ?

And can the dead roots start ?  
And can the withered heart  
Rise upward from despair to joy and  
praise ?

Yes, though with thrills of almost pain,  
They can, again.

For as I turned yesterday, sad and  
slow,

From where my darling lies below,  
Fulfilled with sad sweet thoughts of the  
things that have been,

I saw my dear father's kindly face,  
As he came to meet me with hurried  
pace,

And a grave smile that told me the  
news that he bore was good ;

But he slackened his steps when he saw  
me, and calmed his mood.

And I said, "Tell me all." And he  
answered, "'Tis well, my dear.  
He was faithful ; I knew it, and is, for  
his letter is here,"

And he drew it forth ; and I knew that  
the writer was he,

And the title was that which he bears,  
and 'twas meant for me.

Then my father kissed my forehead and  
left me alone,

And I sat down to read what he said  
on a graveyard stone.

My love ! He too had been ill, for a  
chill he caught

When the Earl lay dying abroad, well-  
nigh brought him to nought ;

Growing to fevered heats and a wandering brain,  
 Till he raved for his nurse of last year  
 to soothe him again ;  
 And when, after many days, he had  
 risen to find  
 The wife he was forced to leave, with  
 unquiet mind,  
 He found me not, but they said I had  
 gone to my home.  
 And so, with loving regards, he pro-  
 mised to come,  
 Almost ere his letter could reach me.  
 Oh, love ! oh, my dear !  
 I shall see you again, though 'tis late :  
 and, meanwhile, a great fear  
 Rises up lest you grieve for your child  
 whom you never have seen.

---

SCENE III.

He has come, he has been ;  
 I have kissed him again and again.  
 Ah, God ! but it is hard to die,  
 For it was not he was to blame at all,  
 but I.  
 It was I, with my coward distrust and  
 unreasoning fear,  
 Who could not put faith in my love,  
 but shrank back from a sneer.  
 I am glad he was true throughout,  
 though my sentence of doom  
 Sounds clear as I lie alone in my own  
 white room.

---

To-day was a happy day,  
 When, upon my husband's breast,  
 I leant beside the grassy mound  
 Where our firstborn lies at rest.

And we mutely went again  
 By the dear old paths once more,  
 And I half forgot my sorrow  
 And the world was as before.

And he spoke with cheering words  
 Of the time when I should come  
 To cherish other children  
 In his old ancestral home.

Oh, my love as true as steel,  
 With your comfort kindly meant,  
 I would not seek to shadow  
 The light of your content ;

But a hundred signs assure me,  
 Signs indefinite yet strong,  
 That my fate is wholly written  
 And I linger not for long.

Dearest, let us cling together,  
 Heart to heart and eye to eye ;  
 Let us be together living,  
 And I shall not fear to die.

---

SCENE IV.—HENRY.

This is the last time that I tread  
 These unforgotten ways,  
 For to-morrow we follow the swallow  
 over the wave.  
 We have spent our Mays ;  
 Chill autumn has come and found us  
 bent over a grave,  
 The grave of our youthful love and the  
 hopes that are dead.

My dear, she is very pale and worn,  
 Save the brilliant spot that flushes on  
 either cheek ;

She recalls no longer the breezes and  
 freshness of morn  
 As she leans upon me, slow and weak ;  
 But I trust the warm summer sun and  
 the honeyed air,  
 And the daily sights and sounds of  
 things that are fair,  
 May rouse her and lighten her load of  
 care.  
 Dear child ! to think of her pining  
 alone,  
 While I lay longing for her and too  
 weak to write,  
 And afraid to disclose by a look or a  
 tone  
 The thing which discovered had wrecked  
 us quite !  
 Ah, me ! 'twas a wretched time ; and  
 now it is done,  
 My father is gone and my son, and I  
 only remain,  
 Weak in frame, with a fading wife and  
 a burden of pain.  
 Dear soul, I will do what by love and  
 by gold can be done ;  
 I will bask with you safe from chill in  
 the southern sun ;  
 And I pray that when summer returns  
 and the meadows grow green,  
 You may sit in my stately home, as  
 happy and proud as a queen.

But, oh ! what a fear is there  
 I dare not speak,  
 As I see the crimson deepen  
 On the pale wan cheek.  
 Nay, love, you are more lovely so,  
 A thousand times more fair,  
 Than when, twelve little months ago,  
 You went so free from care.  
 More dear you are, my love, and sweet,  
 A thousand times more dear,  
 Than when my heart forgot to beat

In the springtime of the year.  
 A thousand times more dear, my love,  
 A thousand times more dear,  
 For the tender pity that you move  
 And the anxious boding fear.

---

To-morrow, may it be  
 A new existence that we twain shall  
 prove  
 Upon the western sea,  
 Bound for some happier land of health  
 and love.

New hopes, new fears, new pains,  
 New joys ; our hearts are ready, and  
 we trust  
 The Omnipotent Will that reigns  
 Lifts not our hopes to dash them in the  
 dust.

We hope ; we cannot tell ;  
 We go together alone, forgetting all ;  
 For love, it shall be well,  
 Though life, a waning fire, may sink  
 and fall.

Yet, if a prayer may move  
 Thy dread decrees, Omnipotent Will,  
 Spare, spare my innocent love  
 To my fond gaze a little longer still.

---

SCENE V.—GWEN.

Here is a calm bright day,  
 And my husband's tender voice ;  
 He has climbed up from the village,  
 And I struggle to rejoice.

For I feel that to sorrow longer  
 For the little one who has fled,

My angel who rejoices  
Among the blessed dead,

Were a morbid grief, displeasing  
To the Lord of joy and pain.  
Nay, I will not sorrow longer ;  
I will strive to live again.

To the beautiful far countries  
Where the soft unfailing sun  
Beams cloudless through the winter,  
And the flowers are never done,

He will take me, undelaying,  
None beside us, only me,  
By the ship that leaves to-morrow  
The great city on the sea ;

Every morning growing milder,  
As we southward wing our way,  
Till our swift ship casts her anchor  
In some blue unruffled bay.

Stately cities I have read of,  
Naples, Rome in all her pride -  
I shall see them, a great lady,  
With my husband at my side.

I shall see them when returning  
From the sacred stream of Nile,  
From vast tombs of unknown rulers,  
And the Sphinx's changeless smile.

I shall see them. But in springtime,  
When the bitter east is done,  
I shall greet these dear old mountains  
Shining in the sober sun ;

I shall see my father smiling ;  
I shall bend once more again  
O'er my sleeper's flower-strewn cradle,  
Mingling tender hope with pain.

I shall come, though, maybe sooner,  
When I shall not see nor hear ;  
For my love has given his promise  
I shall rest beside my dear.

Farewell, oh dear, dear hills !  
I do not know if I shall see you more.  
Farewell ! 'tis set of sun, the night is  
near.  
Farewell ! Below, the mist of autumn  
fills  
The sleeping vale with winding vapours  
flore,  
And hides from sight the yellow woods  
and sere.

But on the heights the day's declining  
fire  
Bathes all the summits in a haze of gold.  
Not yet the cold mist, stealing high and  
higher,  
Touches the purple glow with fingers  
cold ;  
Not yet the ruddy light from out the  
sky  
Goes, nor the orange shadows fade and  
die.

Here, far above the grave of dying day,  
The clear night comes, and hills and  
vales grow dark.  
But soon the first faint star, a lucid spark,  
Glimmers ; and, lo ! the ineffable array !  
A myriad suns for one ! strange suns  
and far,  
The hidden homes where blessed spirits  
are !

Oh ! night of Being, like the night of  
day,  
How should I fear because your shadows  
fall ?

Who knows from what fresh glories thy  
dark pall  
For failing vision lifts the veil away?  
What boundless spiritual orbits rise  
Before the inward gaze of dying eyes?

Farewell, oh little grave,  
Wherein I leave my buried heart awhile!  
Thick yew, protect it well until I come;  
Shelter it; let not winds of winter rave,  
Nor sharp frosts fret nor snows, nor  
floods defile.  
Here is my heart, and here my waiting  
home.  
Farewell! farewell!

## ACT VI.

## SCENE I.—HENRY.

The sweet cold air of these untrodden  
hills  
Breathes gently. Five and twenty years  
have gone  
Since here my father trod, young, high  
in hope,  
With all the world before him; nor as yet  
The slow-consuming fire of deep decay  
Had sapped his youthful hope, and left  
his life  
To drag along its crippled journey, spent  
In southern lands, wherever the chill  
east  
Might come not; year by year: and  
last of all,  
Since I have grown from boyhood,  
visiting  
His country never; cut off and divorced  
From all the joys that make existence  
sweet  
the aspiring great—the fame of  
men—

The name which every morning's broad-  
sheet takes  
To the eyes and hearts of millions—all  
the thirst  
For the statesman's high career sailed,  
and lost  
In a strange lethargy which bound him  
fast  
To an inglorious ease. And yet I know.  
A time there was when the more gene-  
rous part  
Allured his growing soul. For I have  
found  
Among his papers, time-stained notes  
which tell  
Of deeper studies far than I have dreamt  
of;  
Of high hopes and ambitions; such as  
fire  
Those who, as he and I, are placed by  
Fate  
On such high vantage that to will alone  
And labour is enough, and each ap-  
proach  
Of honour, the Senate itself, which  
opens not  
To lower birth until slow-creeping age  
Derides the folly, flings back early  
doors  
To their unbroken youth. These have  
I found.  
And, oh most strange of all! close  
manuscripts  
Of sceptical themes—my father's, his  
who was,  
Of all men I have known, most rapt by  
faith  
And very full of Godhead—doubts and  
fears  
And anxious questionings, changed yet  
the same,  
Differing in form alone from those which  
now



At our own Oxford echo through old  
rooms  
Filled with young heated disputants,  
whose minds  
Seize with a frolic eagerness the doubts  
Which have perplexed all time. All  
these I found—  
Ah, life is wonderful! We are the  
sport  
Of great laws swinging slowly through  
an arc  
Immeasurably vast. We doubt our  
doubts,  
We hug our faiths, and fancy we are free  
Who are shut fast of Time.

What power it was  
Froze fast his life I know not, but  
sometimes  
I think there must have come upon his  
life  
Some overmastering passion, some  
young love  
Such as the poets feign, for some young  
heart,  
Which held him back and clogged him.  
Yet I know—  
I would stake my life upon it—naught  
of wrong  
Came nigh him. Only hardly love it  
was  
That bound him to our mother—the  
high dame  
He spoke of seldom, mourned seldomer  
still,  
Whom scarcely I recall; whose clear  
cold face  
Looks from beneath its coronet in my  
hall,  
Statelier than any of our line. Poor  
mother!  
She left us early—me and little Gwen;  
Gwen, whom men know as Lady  
Gwendoline,

Our father's darling, who now comes  
with me  
When hither, after years of exile spent  
From home and homely scenes, we turn  
and leave  
The turmoil of the Season and the chase  
Of selfish worldlings, eager to secure  
Those who are rich or fair.

I had found of late,  
Mention among his letters here and  
there  
Of this Welsh village, where, when he  
was young,  
He spent a summer. So we left be-  
hind  
The senseless whirl, and now a week or  
more  
In this unclouded weather, bright and  
fair,  
Have wandered careless o'er these  
purple hills,  
Where once our father, older scarce  
than I,  
Roved in that far-off summer. We have  
kept  
Our name and rank a secret, and are  
free  
To come and go at pleasure, as did he,  
Dear father, years ago. Ah! sweet  
and strange,  
The cycle of a life which turns and  
turns  
Round to the self-same spot, changed  
yet the same;  
The same but for the mystic beat of  
Time;  
The same but for the ineffable change  
of Being,  
Which in the same life, grown another,  
works  
Infinite depths of change.  
Somehow—I know not  
If aught it be but fancy—but I think

The secret of his life, if such there  
 were,  
 Lies hid within these hills ; and I re-  
 member  
 That day, when he was dying and his  
 breath  
 Came feebler even than wont—the un-  
 ruffled sea  
 Was sapphire, and the orange-groves  
 behind  
 Showed flecked with gold—we heard a  
 far-off bell  
 Call from the campanile on the hill.  
 And then he roused himself : “ Hark !  
 ’tis the bell—  
 From the dear church-tower on the hill  
 above—  
 They both are there—’tis a fair spot—  
 the path  
 Is steep from out the village, but the air  
 Is balmy—’tis the well-remembered  
 bell—  
 They are singing now in Welsh, and  
 the sound soothes  
 The sleepers by the yew.”

And now they tell me  
 There is indeed a church on yonder  
 hill,  
 A little church half hidden by dark  
 yews,  
 Which looks upon the long green vale  
 \* and scans  
 The ever-winding river. So my sister,  
 Who learnt in Italy the sketcher’s art,  
 Has gone before, armed with all fit  
 devices  
 To snare the fleeting landscape. It is  
 time  
 To join her. I must hasten ; it may be  
 (She is not strong, dear sister, but soon  
 tires)  
 She tires of sketching and awaits me.  
 Father,

I would that you were with us, and  
 might breathe  
 This sweet cold air again as young as I.

---

 SCENE II. GWEN.

How fair and fresh from this gray  
 churchyard shows  
 The rich green vale beneath. Upon  
 the deep  
 Lush meadows, where the black herds  
 grazing seem  
 Like rooks upon the grass, a silvery  
 gleam,  
 Now lost and now discovered, marks  
 the place  
 Where winds the brimming river. Here,  
 thick woods  
 Of oak and beech upon the sloping  
 banks  
 Bend to the shadowy stream which  
 glides beneath.  
 There, through the emerald meads,  
 shallow or deep,  
 It hastes or loiters, till the tall dark  
 elms,  
 Grouped by the distance, hide it. And  
 above,  
 On either hand the eternal mountains  
 rise,  
 Pine-clad below, upon whose upper  
 heights  
 The unfenced heather purples. All the  
 sky  
 Is flecked with soft white fleecy clouds  
 which cast  
 Bewildering charms of shadow ; and  
 beyond,  
 A shining sapphire drawn ’twixt earth  
 and sky,  
 Glitters the summer sea. Most beau-  
 tiful

Thou art, oh motherland, which I  
 have known  
 As yet so little. Beautiful art thou  
 My second mother, sunny Italy,  
 Where the blue heaven is brighter, and  
 the sea  
 Gives back a clearer azure. But for me  
 There grows a tenderer charm from  
 these green fields  
 And purple hills and white-flecked  
 skies, denied  
 To thy more brilliant landscape. Per-  
 haps it is  
 In part because my father loved them  
 well,  
 Dear father whom I loved, and who  
 loved me  
 Closer than might a mother.

Well! enough!  
 I will draw no more to-day, but let the  
 scene  
 Sink on my soul, and fix itself, and  
 breed  
 Fresh scenes of beauty to inspire my  
 hand  
 When the short days are dull, and all  
 the sky  
 A gloomy pall, and gusts of wintry  
 rain  
 Beat on the darkling city.

I will muse  
 A little till my brother comes, and  
 think  
 How good he was whose memory  
 brings us here;  
 How careless of himself, how prompt  
 to give  
 Whatever good a father's hand can  
 give  
 To his motherless girl. I scarcely had  
 a thought  
 He did not share, and as I think,  
 indeed,

He kept no secret from his earliest years  
 Of which I knew not. He has told me  
 all—

His studious youth, his feeble health,  
 the doubt  
 Of God and man which for a while  
 obscured

His noble brain and left it impotent—  
 And somehow it was here, upon these  
 hills,

From out this very spot, it may be,  
 gazing

On all the loveliness of earth and sky  
 And silver sea, the waters of his soul  
 Were loosed, and flowed onward strong  
 and clear,

To join the Infinite Deep!

There comes a cloud  
 Upon the sky and gusts of sudden  
 wind;

The beauty fades, as treacherous as  
 youth,

And fleeting, and I thought I heard a  
 roll

Of thunder drawing near. I would my  
 brother

Were come. I am afraid. The church  
 is closed—

It is not here as 'tis in Italy,

Where all who choose may kneel as  
 welcome guests

Within God's House; but yon thick  
 yew that stands

Above that gleaming cross will shelter  
 me

From heavier storms than this.

Here I am safe.  
 See with what tender care some loving  
 hand

Keeps green the sward, and sets it round  
 with flowers

That bloom as in a garden! One red  
 rose

Twines round the cross, and sheds in  
 this rude wind  
 Its crimson petals. Two graves stretch  
 beneath,  
 And three sleep under. Ah! 'tis the  
 old vicar's  
 Who lived here forty years and died  
 last year.  
 "ALSO"—ah, see my brother comes at  
 last—  
 "ALSO OF"—strange, almost my name  
 --GWENLIAN,  
 HIS DAUGHTER, WHO DIED AGED  
 TWENTY YEARS".  
 The year?—one year before my father's  
 marriage—  
 Ah me! these two were parted long,  
 long years!  
 "COUNTESS OF"—What is this? My  
 father's title!  
 Father, what means it?—"AND HER  
 INFANT SON  
 HENRY, LORD"—What, my brother's?  
 What is this?  
 It is strange. Quick! I am faint-  
 ing . . .

Henry! Henry!

### EPILOGUE.

The silent Forces of the World,  
 Time, Change, and Fate, deride us  
 still;  
 Nor ever from the hidden summit,  
 furled,  
 Where sits the Eternal Will,  
 The clouds of Pain and Error rise  
 Before our straining eyes.

It is to-day as 'twas before,  
 From the far days when Man began to  
 speak,

Ere Moses preached or Homer sung,  
 Ere Buddha's musing thought or Plato's  
 silvery tongue.

We pace our destined path with failing  
 footsteps weak;

A little more we see, a little more  
 Of that great orb which shineth day and  
 night

Through the high heaven, now hidden,  
 now too bright,

The Sun to which the earth on which  
 we are,

Life's labouring world, is as the feeblest  
 star.

Nor this firm globe we know

Which lies beneath our feet;

Nor by what grades we have grown and  
 yet shall grow,

Through chains of miracle, more and  
 more complete;

By what decrees the watery earth  
 Compacted grew the womb of countless  
 birth;

Nor, when the failing breath  
 Is taken by the frozen lips of Death,  
 Whither the Spoiler, fleeing with his  
 prey,

The fluttering, wandering Wonder bears  
 away.

The powers of Pain and Wrong,  
 Immeasurably strong.

Assail our souls, and chill with common  
 doubt

Clear brain and heart devout:

War, Pestilence, and Famine, as of old,  
 The lust of the flesh, the baser lust of  
 gold,

Vex us and harm us still;

Fire comes, and crash and wreck, and  
 lives are shed

As if the Eternal Will itself were dead;

And sometimes Wrong and Right, the thing we fear,	Our trivial days, and calms the ignoble strife,
The thing we cherish, draw confusedly near ;	Raises the waning life with his sweet breath,
We know not which to choose, we cannot separate	And from the arms of Death
Our longing and our hate.	Soars with it to the eternal shore, Where sight or thought of evil comes no more.

But Love the Conqueror, Love, Im- mortal Love,	Love sitteth now above,
Through the high heaven doth move,	Enthroned in glory,
Spurning the brute earth with his purple wings,	And yet hath deigned to move Through life's sad story.
And from the great Sun brings Some radiant beam to light the House of Life,	Fair Name, we are only thine ! Thou only art divine !
Uplifts our grosser thought, and makes us pure ;	Be with us to the end, for there is none
And to a Higher Purpose doth mature	But thou to bind together God and Man in one !

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## THE ODE OF LIFE.

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### THE ODE OF CREATION.

A DARK and boundless deep,  
And a blind height above,  
Untrodden fields of sleep,  
Wherein no force may move,  
Where every sound is still,  
Nor breathes a living breath ;—  
These are the heights, these are the  
depths, these are the voids of  
Death.

But slowly on the lifeless plain  
There wakes a far-sent ray, a little star,  
A tiny spark of Being from afar,  
A throb of precious pain.

It is done, it has been, it has risen, the  
glimmer of Life,

The dark void withdrawing around,  
It breaks with a whisper of sound,  
Through the wastes of silence and sleep,  
There is no more stillness nor Death,  
The great Universe wakes with a deep-  
drawn singultient breath.

The great orbs cohere and spin on their  
measureless ways—

—The great suns awaken and shine,  
ringed with girdles of fire every  
one—

All the worlds are on fire and ablaze—  
The flaming globes circle and whirl  
each one round its sun

—The hot seas seethe and bellow—  
the fixed hills glow—  
And the blast of Creation burns fierce  
while the centuries grow ;  
And Life and Time have begun !

Myriads on myriads of years !  
Or was there indeed no time except  
in the Infinite Mind ?  
And was there indeed no ceaseless  
circling of spheres ?  
Since no sentient eye might mark the  
peripheries wind,  
And at length the great Life of the  
worlds grown concentrate would  
thrill  
Through some lowly speck of matter,  
which, waxing apart,  
Grew conscious by slow degrees, and  
blossomed in Will ;  
Weak centres of Force, which floated  
as motes in a beam,  
Automatic, contracting, expanding, but  
consciousless yet.  
Till a stronger force working within  
them would raise them once more,  
Pushing with inchoate fin as if with an  
oar  
Afloat on the slow warm stream ;  
And another Creation has come and a  
new-begun strife,  
With this primal glimmer of life.

Myriads on myriads of years ! if Time  
there were yet,  
When no soul was by to remember or  
to forget ;  
The fin growing stronger, and changing  
to wing or to claw,  
Struggle on struggle, sentience, con-  
sciousness, ravin, and pain,  
Monstrous and mailed forms in the  
ooze, or hurtling thro' air,

Waging through aeons of time the in-  
effable struggles which gain  
Order thro' waste and thro' wear.  
Till the mastodon stalks forth in might  
with hoof and with jaw,  
And the law of the Higher prevails, the  
Ultimate Law,  
And the cooler earth teems with life, on  
land and in sea :  
Life organic in beast, fish, or bird, in  
herb or in tree,  
Life dominant, life exulting with quick-  
coming breath,  
Life that fades down and sinks in the  
silence and slumber of Death.  
But no soul to mark the struggle nor  
thought which might turn  
To whence those weird fires burn.  
Successions, progressions, a scheme of  
insensible life,  
One Will alone directing the infinite  
strife,  
One Force, one Eye, one Sole and  
Regarding Mind,  
In a Universe deaf and blind !

And was it some Inner Law,  
Some hidden potency of Force,  
Or some creative breath Divine,  
Which sped the creature on its upward  
course ?  
Until at last it woke and saw,  
With visual forces fine,  
The Godhead that was round it every-  
where,  
The spiritual essence fair,  
Which doth innerve this outward show  
of things—  
And filled the brute with high imagin-  
ings,  
And winging it with new-found wings  
Lifted its aspect to the infinite sky,  
Where, in the Light of the Creative Eye

Its ancient slough away it cast,  
And rose to Man at last !

How know we or can trace  
The first beginnings of all Time,  
Who know not yet indeed how this our  
    race  
Rises to heights sublime?  
In darkness does our life begin,  
Hidden and fenced within.  
In darkness and obscurity  
Dwell the blind germs which yet shall  
    be.  
In darkness the slow rolling months  
    fulfil  
The pre-ordained will.  
And even in childhood's earliest days,  
No memory-haunted ways  
Take our first footsteps; but in deep  
And unremembered tracts of sleep  
The immature creature dwells, nor can  
    recall  
Its former self or primal state at all.

### THE ODE OF INFANCY.

Oh, little child !  
Stretched on thy mother's knees, with  
    steadfast gaze  
And innocent aspect mild,  
Viewing this novel scene in mute amaze,  
Following the moving light, thy  
    mother's smile,  
And storing up the while  
New precious knowledge till thou  
    com'st to be  
Sage it may be or clown—  
Soaring or sinking down,  
To topmost heights of weal or depths of  
    misery ;  
How shall I dare to mark thy innocent  
    look,

And write as in a book  
Thy infinite possibilities of life ;  
What fate awaits thee in the coming  
    strife,  
What joys, what triumphs in the grow-  
    ing years,  
What depths of woe and tears ?

I see thee lie  
Safe in thy silken cradle, sunk in down,  
Within thy father's palace-chambers  
    fair ;  
Thy guarded slumbers breathing tem-  
    pered air ;  
The soft eyes, full of yearning, watch-  
    ing by ;  
Caressing arms waiting thy waking cry ;  
All luxury and state which can assuage  
Life's painful heritage ;  
The prayers of a people swell for thee  
Up to the careless skies which cover all.  
And yet it may be thine to fall  
Far from thy loved and native land,  
And end thy imperfect, innocent life-  
    tale here,  
Forsaken on a savage desert strand,  
Pierced through and through by some  
    barbarian spear.

I see thy tiny face  
Pale, worn with hunger, and large  
    hollow eyes,  
Upon the frozen way-side laid  
Stiffening in thy dead mother's cold  
    embrace.  
I hear thy piteous cries  
When the sot flings thee down with  
    limbs that bleed—  
Flings thee, and takes no heed ;  
Weak, helpless, born to misery, girt  
    round  
With vice and sin and shame, in sight  
    and sound.

Poor life foredoomed, already sunk and  
lost ;

Too often sent to tread the ways of  
death

With childish failing breath ;

Yet oftentimes holding power

To bloom a virgin flower

Upon the untrodden heights closed to  
the multitude,

Among the wise and good.

Or with brown face thou comest and  
limb,

Naked, on the warm soil that bears the  
palm ;

Or haply the young heir of all the dim  
And half-forgotten realms whose ruins  
stand

Sown lion-haunted on the deathlike calm  
Which wraps the Egyptian or Assyrian  
sand,

Reared 'midst the dust of empires ; or  
art now

As through all history thou wert, the  
child

Of savage parents, rude and wild,  
Springing and falling ; born to flower  
and seed,

Or sink upon the uncaring earth, a weed  
Trodden by the pitiless feet of cruel men  
With hearts that ape the tiger's ; or art  
born

In the old, old empire, which hath long  
outworn

God and the hopes of man, and yet  
coheres,

Propped by its own far-reaching bulk,  
as when

It did emerge from savagery and grew,

Oh, child ! as yet may you,

To worldly strength, and knowledge,  
and dead lore

Of wisdom fled before,

And dull content, and soulless hopes  
and fears.

Wherever thou mayest be,

To me thou art wonderful and strange  
to see—

Busied with trifles, rapt with simple toys,

As men with graver joys.

I hear thy lisping accents slowly reach

The miracle of speech ;

I mark thy innocent smile ;

I treasure up each baby wile

Which smooths the brow of thought,  
the front of care.

Thou royal scion, born to be the heir  
Of all the unrecorded days, since first  
Man rose to his full being, once blest,  
and then accurst !

In weal and woe and ill

Thou art a miracle still.

From snow-bound hut to equatorial  
strand,

Above thee still regarding angels stand ;  
While thy brief life-tale fleeteth like a  
dream

Across Creation's glass.

Dark powers of ill press thee on either  
side,

As now thy swift years pass,

Revealing on the young soul's tablets  
white

The eternal characters of Right ;

Or sometimes with the growing years  
grown strong

The unhallowed signs of wrong.

Oh, little child ! thou bringest with  
thee still,

As Moses, parting from the fiery hill,

Some dim reflection in thine eyes,

Some sense of Godhead, some indefinite  
wonder



As of one drifted here unwillingly ;  
 Who knows no speech of ours, and yet  
     doth keep  
 Some dumb remembrance of a gracious  
     home  
 Which lights his waking hours and fills  
     his sleep  
 With precious visions which unbidden  
     come ;  
 Some golden link which nought of earth  
     can sunder,  
 Some glimpse of a more glorious land  
     and sea !

Oh, precious vision fleeting past !  
 Oh, age too fair to last !  
 For soon new gifts and powers are  
     thine,  
 And growing springs and summers  
     bring  
 Boyhood or girlhood hastening,  
 And nerve the agile limb, and teach,  
 With the new gift of speech,  
 The wonders that stand round on every  
     side,  
 And Life's imperial portals opening  
     gradually wide.

### THE ODE OF CHILDHOOD.

#### I. BOYHOOD.

FAIR budding age,  
 Which next upon life's stage  
 Pastest a fairy dream before the eyes,  
 High health and bounding limb,  
 Eager and stretching towards the  
     wished-for prize ;  
 Whate'er the passing care that takes  
     thy thought,  
 I catch the sweet brisk scent of trodden  
     grass  
 When through the golden afternoon

Of a long day in June,  
 Until the twilight dim,  
 The playfield echoes with the joyous  
     noise  
 Of troops of agile boys,  
 Who, bare-armed, throw the rapid-  
     bounding ball ;  
 Who shout and race and fall.  
 I see the warm pool fringed with  
     meadow-sweet,  
 Where stream in summer, with eager  
     feet  
 Through gold of buttercups and crested  
     grass  
 The gay processions stripping as they  
     pass.  
 I hear the cool and glassy depths  
     divide  
 As the bold fair young bodies, far more  
     fair  
 Than ever sculptured Nereids were,  
 Plunge fearless down, or push, with  
     front or side,  
 Through the caressing wave.  
 I mark the deadly chill, thro' the young  
     blood,  
 When some young life, snatched from  
     the cruel flood,  
 Looks once upon the flowers, the fields,  
     the sun,—  
 Looks once, and then is done !  
 Or the grey, frosty field, and the great  
     ball  
 Urged on by flying feet.  
 Or when the skate rings on the frozen  
     lake,  
 The gliding phantoms fleet,  
 Rosy with health, and laughing though  
     they fall.  
 Or by the rapid stream or swirling  
     pool,  
 The fisher, with his pliant wand.  
 Or by the covert-side, taking his stand,

The shooter, watching patient hour by  
     hour,  
 With that hard youthful heart that  
     young breasts hold,  
 Till the fur glances through the brake ;  
 As when our savage sires wandered of  
     old,  
 Hungering through primal wastes. I  
     see them all,  
 The brisk, swift days of youth, which  
     cares for nought  
 But for the joy of living ; scarce a  
     thought  
 Of Love, or Knowledge, or at best  
 Such labour as gives zest  
 To the great joy of living. Oh, blest  
     time !  
 For which each passing hour rings out  
     a chime  
 Of joy-bells all the year ; ay, tho'  
     through days  
 Of ill thou farest, and unhappy ways ;  
 Or whether on the sun-struck lands  
     thy feet  
 Are the young savage hunter's, lithe  
     and fleet,  
 Turning at night-fall to thy father's  
     cot,  
 Bathed in the full white moonlight ; or  
     dost stand  
 'Mid the hushed plains of some for-  
     saken land ;—  
 Where'er thou art, oh, boyhood ! thou  
     art free  
 And fresh as the young breeze in summer  
     born  
 On sun-kissed hills or on the laughing  
     sea,  
 Or gay bird-music breathing of the  
     morn,  
 Or some sweet rose-bud pearded with  
     early dew,  
 As brief and fair as you.

## II. GIRLHOOD.

Or in another channel still more sweet,  
 Life's current flows along,  
 Ere yet the tide of passion, full and  
     strong,  
 Hurries the maiden's feet.  
 Oh, sweet and early girlish years  
 Of innocent hopes and fears !  
 Busied with fancies bright and gay,  
 Which Love shall chase away,  
 When, with the flutter of celestial  
     wings,  
 He stirs the soul forth from its depths,  
     and brings  
 Healing from trouble. Oh, deep well  
 Of fairy fancies undefiled !  
 Oh, sweet and innocent child !  
  
 Now with thy doll I see thee full of care,  
 Or filled already with the mother's air,  
 Hushing thy child to sleep.  
 And now thyself immersed in slumbers,  
     deep  
 Yet light, I see thee lie.  
 And now the singer, lifting a clear  
     voice  
 In soaring hymns or carols that rejoice,  
 Or busied with thy seam, or doubly fair  
 For the unconscious rapture of thy look  
 Lost in some simple book.  
 Whate'er the colour of thy face,  
 Thou art fulfilled with grace.  
 Oh, little maiden, fair or brown !  
 Thine is the simple beauty which doth  
     crown  
 The dreams of happy fathers, who have  
     past  
 By Love and Passion, and have come  
 To know pure joys of home ;  
 And for the hurry and haste of younger  
     years,  
 Have taken the hearth that cheers,

And the fair realm of duty, and delight  
Of innocent faces bright  
And the sweet wells of deep untroubled  
love  
A daughter's name can move.

In every clime and age I see thee  
still,  
Since the rude nomads wandered forth  
at will  
Upon the unbounded Aryan pastures  
wild--

There thou wert, oh, fair child !  
"The milker" 'twas they called thee ;  
all day long  
Tending the browsing herds with high-  
voiced song ;

(Or on some sun-warmed place  
Upon the flower-faced grass,  
Watching the old clouds pass,  
And weaving wreaths with such wild  
grace

And sprightly girlish glee  
As Proserpine did once in sunny Sicily.

Or maybe by some widowed hearth—  
The fairest, saddest sight on earth,  
Filled too soon with sweet care,  
And bringing back the voice and air  
Of thy dead mother ; thou art set  
An innocent virgin-mother, childlike  
yet.

Thy baby sisters on thy loving arm  
Sleep fast, secure from harm.  
Thou hast no time for game or toy,  
Or other thought but this ;  
Finding thy full reward, thy chiefest joy,  
In thy fond father's kiss.

Or under palms to-day,  
Thy childhood fleets away ;  
Or by the broadening shadow hid,  
Of tomb or pyramid ;

In stainless whiteness : or maybe  
Forlorn in haunts of misery ;  
Thou keepest on thy rounded face  
Some unforgotten trace  
Of the old primal days unsung,  
Of the fresh breezes of pure morn  
When the first maiden child was born,  
And Time was young.

---

Fair streams which run as yet  
Each in its separate channel from the  
snows ;  
Boyhood and girlhood ; while Life's  
banks are set  
With blooms that kiss the clear lymph  
as it flows,  
One swift and strong and deep,  
One where the lilies sleep ;—  
Fair streams, which soon some stress  
of Life and Time  
Shall bring together,  
Under new magical skies and the  
strange weather  
Of an enchanted clime.

### THE ODE OF YOUTH.

Now upon the tree of life there rise  
Before our wondering eyes  
Two strange new flowers of varied hue.  
The tree is grown,  
The flowers are blown,  
There is nought wanting to its early  
sweetness ;  
But with a fair completeness,  
The purple bloom and white  
Fill the entranced, admiring sight.  
The tree is grown, the tree is strong ;  
Oh ! dear to art and song !

Fair time of Flowers ! within whose  
 chalice sweet  
 Lurks Youth with rosy feet,  
 And Love with purple folded wing,  
 And birdlike thoughts that sing.

### I.—EARLY MANHOOD.

And first, oh youth, I see thee with the  
 plume  
 Of thy thick locks upon thy forehead  
 set,  
 And thy frank eyes kindling with fire,  
 or dim  
 With soaring thoughts of heaven, or wet  
 With kindly dews of pity ; the straight  
 limb  
 And the strong arm, and force that  
 never tires ;  
 The cheek and lip touched with the  
 early down  
 Of manhood's fullest crown ;  
 The heart, which hardly thought of  
 passion fires ;  
 The mind, which opens like a flower in  
 spring  
 To all the wanton airs the seasons  
 bring ;—  
 The young existence self-contained no  
 longer,  
 But pressing outward hour by hour,  
 Fired with a thirst continually stronger,  
 For some supreme white flower.  
 Whatever be the prize—  
 Whether upon the difficult heights of  
 Thought,  
 Or 'midst the white laborious dust of  
 Duty,  
 Or on the peaks of Power, the bloom  
 be sought,  
 Or in the flush and thrill of the new  
 Beauty  
 Born of a maiden's eyes.

Oh, happiest age of all  
 When hope is without measure  
 And life a thrill of pleasure,  
 And health is high and force unspent,  
 Nor Disappointment yet, nor sordid  
 Care,  
 Nor yet Satiety, nor the cold chill  
 Which creeps upon the world-worn  
 heart to kill  
 All higher hope, and leaves us to  
 despair ;  
 Nor doubt of God or men can touch,  
 but all  
 The garden ground of Life is opened  
 wide ;  
 And lo ! on every side  
 The flowers of spring are blooming, and  
 the air  
 Is scented, and sweet song is every-  
 where,  
 And young eyes read from an en-  
 charmed book,  
 With rapt entranced look,  
 Loves legend and the Dream of days to  
 be,  
 And fables fair of Life's mythology,  
 Through the still hours till dewy  
 twilight fall.

Whatever be the page—  
 Whether of metaphysical riddles faint,  
 Or the rapt visions of some ancient seer,  
 The burning thoughts of saint,  
 Or maxims of the sage—  
 Thou comest, oh youth, with thought  
 as sure,  
 With mind severe and pure ;  
 Thou takest afresh, with each return-  
 ing year,  
 The fair thin dreams, the philosophic  
 lore  
 Of the great names of yore—

Plato the wise, Confucius, Socrates,  
The blessed Gautama—all are thine ;  
Upon thee year by year the words  
divine

Of our great Master, falling like the  
dew,

Sway thee, to hate the wrong, to love  
the true ;

For thee the fair poetic page is spread  
Of the great living and the greater  
dead ;

For thee the glorious gains of Science lie  
Stretched open to thine eye ;

And to thy fresh and undimmed brain,  
The mysteries of Number and of Space  
Seem easy to explain ;

Thou lookest with clear gaze upon the  
long

Confusions of the Race, the paradox of  
Wrong ;

And dost not fear to trace,

With youth's strong fiery faith that  
knows no chill,

The secret of Transgression, the prime  
source

Of Good and Evil, and the unfailing  
course

Of the Ineffable Will.

And sometimes life, glowing with too  
fierce fire,

O'er sea and land in rapid chase,

Snatches thee with tumultuous will,

And careless, breathless pace.

Sometimes a darker thought

Comes on thee as a shadow of night,

Marring thy young life's white,

And some new longing in the past  
untaught,

And at thy side shamefast Desire

Stands unreprieved and guides thy bash-  
ful feet

To where, girt by dim depths of solitude,

Sits Fancy, disarrayed, in a deep wood ;  
And ah, but Youth runs swift and  
Pleasure is sweet !

And sometimes, too, looking with too  
bold eye

Upon the unclouded sky,

Sudden the heavens are hidden, and  
the great Sun

Sinks as if day were done,

And the brain reels and all the life  
grows faint,

Smitten by too much light ; or a thick  
haze

Born out of sense doth overcloud

The soul, and leaves it blind and in  
amaze,

And the young heart is dull and the  
young brain

Dark till God shine again.

Oh, fairest age of all !

Whate'er thy race or clime,

To-day ten thousand cities on thee call,  
Broad plain and palm-fringed isle.

Thine is the swelling life, the eager  
glance and smile,

Oh, precious fruit of Life and Time !

Oh, worker of the world ! to whose  
young arm

The brute earth yields and wrong, as  
to a charm ;

Young seaman, soldier, student, toiler  
at the plough,

Or loom, or forge, or mine, a kingly  
growth art thou !

Where'er thou art, though earthy, oft  
and coarse,

Thou bearest with thee hidden springs  
of force,

Creative power, the flower, the fruitful  
strife,

The germ, the potency of Life,

Which draws all things to thee unwittingly.

The Future lies within thy loins, and  
all the Days to be

To thee Time giveth to beget,

The Thought that shall redeem and  
lift Man higher yet.

## II. MAIDENHOOD.

But lo ! another form appears  
Upon Life's glass. Oh, pure and  
white !

Oh, delicate and bright !

Oh, primal growth of Time !

Sweet maidenhood ! that to a silvery  
chime

Of music, and chaste fancies undefiled,

And modest grace and mild,

Comest, best gift of God to men,

As fair to-day as when

The first man, waking from his deep

And fancy-haunted sleep,

Found his strength spent, and at his  
side

His fair dream glorified ;

High-soaring note, leading harmonious  
song

Through secular discords long.

Oh, lily of Life's garden ! fair of hue

And sweet of scent, watered with  
heaven's own dew ;

Fair being, holding hidden motherhood  
And undeveloped good ;

Implicit in thee, even as white blooms  
hold

Their fragrant globes of gold,

Men know no praise they can withhold  
from thee,

Oh, sweet virginity !

Since Artemis first trod the youngling  
earth.

Thou glorious and surpassing birth !

The Vestal fires were thine, the convents  
cold

Are thine as those of old,

To thee, when strong sweet flowers of  
Life and Sense,

Scent gross, we turn, oh white and  
gracious innocence !

Yea, still, while life flows fast and free,  
To thee we turn a world-worn eye.

Throbbing delights are youth's and  
pulses high ;

Yet these at last will ebb, and then  
to thee

We turn, oh fair pale lily, clothed with  
purity !

For sure it is indeed

Two streams through Life's ground flow,  
and both are good—

The one whose goal is gracious mother-  
hood ;

The other in the cloister pale and dim  
Finding sufficient need

In pure observance, rite, and soaring  
hymn.

We may not blame nor hold them wrong  
Who through their lives their liturgies  
prolong,

Even though the prize of motherhood  
be great.

But always thine, oh, blest estate !

Thine it is, under youth's hot sun, to  
keep

Celestial snows and pure abysses deep.

I see thy fair expanding mind,

A precious blossom parcel-blown,

Not with the young man's noble rage,

But with a gentler radiance all thy own,

Fixed now on history's fabled page,

Now on the bard's diviner thought,

And now by some deep music stirred,

Deeper than any spoken word,  
Or sweet love-story soft as southern  
wind.

Dear flower and fair to mortal eye,  
Whatever be thy age, thy clime, thy race,  
Whether the gentle curve of thy young  
breast

Be hidden in white lawn or stand confest  
In innocent brown nakedness and grace,  
Thou art the high and unattained prize  
Of all the generations that have been ;  
Upon Life's throne thou sittest as a  
Queen,

And at thy gracious feet  
The ages kneel to thy eternal Truth.  
Thy pure and spotless innocence,  
And free from stain of Time and Sense,  
Thy undefiled youth.

White flower of Life's tree,  
Love like a wanton bee,  
Shall fly to thee, and from thy deep  
cold cells

Rise the honey. Tranquil stream,  
That from the chill heart of the un-  
trodden snow,

So calm and clear dost flow ;  
Spring wakes beneath the gleam  
Of a new sun which swells  
A warm and rapid torrent strong,  
Soon in the sunny balmy weather,  
To break its banks and bear together  
Your mingled streams along.

### THE ODE OF LOVE.

I am afraid  
To sing thee, oh Immortal Love, who  
know  
By what majestic voices long ago  
Thy eulogy was said.

I do not dare  
To bring a voice which thou didst never  
train,

To the high-soaring difficult air  
Of thy celestial strain.  
Yet how of Life to sing, and yet not  
tell of Love ;

And since thou art the source of song,  
And all our hearts dost move,  
I will essay thy praise nor fear to do  
thee wrong.

For see, the lovers go  
With lingering steps and slow,  
By dim arcades where sunbeams scarcely  
reach ;

On sea-struck northern beach ;  
Or breathless tropic strand,  
By evening breezes fanned ;  
Or through the thick life-laden air  
Of some great city ; or through the  
hush

Of summer twilights 'midst the corn ;  
When all the dying heavens glow and  
blush

Or the young moonlight curves its  
crescent horn.

Oh, wondrous bond that binds  
In one sweet concord separate minds,  
And from their union gives  
To the rapt gazer's eye  
A finer essence and more high,  
A young and winged God, who lives  
In purer air and seeks a loftier sky !  
If growing cares and lower aims should  
banish

All thought of heavenly hopes and  
higher things,  
While we can mount upon thy soaring  
wings  
They shall not wholly vanish.

Thou art the immortal part of man, the  
soul,  
Which, scorning earth's control,  
Lifts us from selfish thought and grovel-  
ling gains.  
Thou always, whilst thy power remains,  
Canst pierce the dull dead weight of  
cloud,  
By which our thought is bowed,  
And raise our clear and cleansed eyes  
To the eternal skies.

No sting of sense it is  
That gives thee wing and lifts thee up  
to heaven.  
Too high art thou for this ;  
Ethereal, pure, free from earth's grosser  
leaven.  
If ought of sense be thine, 'tis but the air,  
Whose weight can lift thee up to soar,  
Which can thy heavenward pinions bear  
From brute earth more and more  
Up to the fount of Power and Love  
Whence all things move.

And see, the lovers go  
With lingering steps and slow,  
Over all the world together, all in all,  
Over all the world ! Great empires fall ;  
The onward march of Man seems spent ;  
The nations rot in dull content ;  
The blight of war, a bitter flood,  
From continent to continent,  
Surges in waves of blood ;  
The light of knowledge sinks, the fire  
of thought burns low ;  
There seems scant thought of God ; but  
yet  
One power there is men ne'er forget,  
And still through every land beneath  
the skies,  
Rapt, careless, looking in each other's  
eyes,

With lingering steps and slow,  
The lovers go.

A pillar of light  
Goes evermore before their dazzled eyes.  
Purple and golden-bright,  
Youth's vast horizons spread and the  
unbounded skies.  
Oh blessed dream which for awhile dost  
hide  
The sorrows of the world and leave life  
glorified.  
Oh blessed light that risest still,  
Young eyes and souls to fill !

Linked arms and hearts aglow ;  
Wherever man is more than brute,  
To this self-sacrifice our natures grow.  
Rapt each in each they go, and mute,  
Listening to the sweet song  
Which Love, with mystic accents, all  
day long  
Sings to them, like a hidden bird,  
Sweeter than e'er was seen or heard,  
Which from life's thick-leaved tree  
Sings sadly, merrily,  
A strange, mixed song, a changeful  
strain,  
Which rises now to joy and jollity,  
Now seemeth to complain ;  
But with a sweeter music far than is  
Of earthborn melodies.

He sees within her eyes  
That which his nature needs to be com-  
plete—  
The grace, the pureness, the diviner sweet,  
Which to rude souls and strong our Life  
denies ;  
The vision of his nightly dream ;  
More pure than e'er did seem  
The Nymphs of old, by wood, or hill,  
or stream.



She views in him the strong  
Deep note which adds the fulness to  
life's song ;

High aims and thoughts that glow  
She does not dream, she cannot know  
What turbid forces rude and wild  
Sully his youth's tumultuous flow ;  
She, full of virgin fancies, pale and mild.

They draw to each other, they flow to  
the deep as one,  
Together thro' all lands beneath the sun,  
In twin attempered streams, set side by  
side,

So near that scarce a footpace may divide  
Their separate depths, and this maybe  
is best ;

Or maybe in each other lost,  
In calm or tempest-tost,  
One broad full river they roll on to the  
sea,

One full accordant harmony,  
High song and deep, one perfect note ;  
Or maybe troublous as the wintry wave,  
Or some hoarse accent of a tuneless  
throat,

They know no longer peace or rest,  
Ill-mated, hapless, self-opprest,  
Till silent in the grave.

Yet draw together, draw together still,  
Fair souls and free, fair souls and young !  
Still shall thy praise, Immortal Love,  
be sung !

Thou art the Spirit which doth animate ;  
The Universal Will,  
Which speeds the Race upon the ways  
of Fate ;

Which speeds it onwards, gaining  
strength

Little by little, line on line,  
Till, as our hope is, risen at length

To plenitude Divine,  
It comes to what high issue rare  
The Future shall prepare.

### THE ODE OF PERFECT YEARS.

Now flower and perfect fruit  
Together dress the tree,  
High midsummer has come, midsum-  
mer mute

Of song, but rich to scent and sight.  
The sun is high in heaven, the skies  
are bright

And full of blessedness,  
High hope and wild endeavour  
Have fled or sunk for ever ;  
Only the swifter seasons onward press,  
And every day that goes  
Is a full-scented, full-blown garden rose,  
Orb'd, complete.

And every hour brings its own burden  
sweet

Of daily duty, precious care ;  
Wherefrom the visible landscape calm  
and clear

Shows finer far, and the high heaven  
more near,

Than ever morning skies of sunrise  
were.

I miss the unbounded hope of old,  
The freshness and the glow of youth ;  
I miss the fever and the fret,  
The luminous haze of gold.

I see a mind clearer and calmer yet,  
A more unselfish love, a more unclouded  
truth ;

Such gain I take, and this  
More gracious shows and fair than that  
I miss.

I. FATHERHOOD.

Oh, father ! sitting at thy hearth,  
 With sunny heads around and lisping  
 talk,  
 For whom the world without and all  
 the earth  
 Is nought to this ; and to the strong  
 deep love  
 Which, mixed with pity, all thy soul  
 doth move.  
 Strong worker, watching o'er the tot-  
 tering walk  
 And feeble limbs and growing thought  
 and brain,  
 Réjoicing in each new-found gain  
 As the first sire, alone in Paradise ;  
 And patient and content to work all  
 day,  
 If with the eve returning from thy toil  
 Thou canst put off the sad world's stain  
 and soil,  
 And bending downward to thy chil-  
 dren's eyes,  
 Rise cleansed and pure as they.  
 I know not if life holds a more divine  
 Or fairer lot than thine.  
 Strong, patient worker, king of those  
 who can  
 To its high goal of Things to be,  
 Its goal of Fate and Mystery,  
 Lead forth the race of Man !

Thy way is oftentimes hard,  
 And toilsome oft thy feet ;  
 Thine are the days of anxious care,  
 When the spent brain reels, or the  
 strong arm tires ;  
 Yet all the ease and charm of days that  
 were,  
 And Pleasure paling all her fading fires,  
 Allure no more, but the tired hunter  
 now,

Or now the worker with the furrowed  
 brow  
 On frozen wastes or sun-struck thou  
 dost show ;  
 By mart, or loom, or mine, or bending  
 down  
 Chained to thy desk within the stifling  
 town,  
 Thou toilest daily that thy brood may  
 live.  
 Cares are thine, cares, and the unselfish  
 mind  
 Which spends itself for others and can  
 find  
 How blest it is without return to give.  
 Whate'er thy race or speech, thou art  
 the same ;  
 Before thy eyes Duty, a constant flame,  
 Shines always steadfast with unchang-  
 ing light,  
 Through dark days and through bright.  
 Sometimes, by too great misery bowed  
 down,  
 Or poison-draughts brought lower than  
 the beast,  
 Thou comest to bate the hollow eyes  
 around,  
 Dreading thy cares increased,  
 And dost despise thy own,  
 And canst thy dead heart steel against  
 their cries,  
 And mark unmoved the hunger in their  
 eyes ;  
 Or sometimes, filled with love, art  
 powerless to aid.  
 Oh, misery, to make our souls afraid !  
 Or if a happier lot  
 Await thee, yet by precious wells of  
 tears  
 Thy life's road goes, vain hopes and  
 anxious fears.

Thine 'tis, perchance, to mark the  
 grassy mound  
 Which keeps, within the churchyard's  
 narrow ground,  
 Thy darling who is not.  
 Hopes sunk in tears, tears that ascend  
 to hope ;  
 Such is thy horoscope,  
 Oh father, standing by the little grave,  
 And impotent to save !

Thy heart is moved with pity  
 For thy young growing lives, who needs  
 must come  
 To leave the safe and sacred walls of  
 home ;  
 For whose young souls, Life, like a  
 cruel city,  
 Spreads out her nets of sin.  
 Thou knowest well of old  
 The strong allurements which they  
 scarce may shun,  
 The subtle wiles, the innocent lives  
 undone,  
 The tide of passion, scorning all con-  
 trol,  
 And thou art filled with an immense  
 despair,  
 Wherefrom thy heart beats slow, thy  
 eyes grow dim,  
 As when of yore thou heardst them  
 lisp a hymn  
 With early childish lips : thou canst  
 not bear  
 To think of that young whiteness soiled  
 and foul,  
 Or that thick darkness blotting the  
 young soul.

Yet from thy grief and pain  
 Comes oftentimes greater gain  
 Than all thy loss.  
 Thou knowest what it is to grieve,

And from the burden of thy cross  
 Thou comest to believe.  
 Thou who hast lost and yet dost love,  
 Thou, too, a Father hast in some dim  
 sphere above,  
 Who doth regard thy joys, thy miseries,  
 Thy petty doubts of Him, thy feeble  
 learning,  
 Thy faults, thy pains, thy childish doubt  
 and yearning,  
 Even as thou dost these.

## II. MOTHERHOOD.

But here is one who over all the earth  
 Is worshipped and is blest,  
 Who doth rejoice from holier springs of  
 mirth,  
 And sorrow from a deeper fount of  
 tears,  
 On whose sweet bosom is our earliest  
 rest,  
 Whose tender voice that cheers  
 Is our first memory, which still doth  
 last  
 Thro' all our later past—  
 The love of love or child, the world-  
 worn strife,  
 The turmoil and the triumphs of a  
 life—  
 The sweet maid-mother, pure and  
 mild,  
 The deep love undefiled.

Thou art the universal praise  
 Of every human heart, the secret shrine  
 Where seer and savage keep a dream  
 divine  
 Through growing and declining days ;  
 And but for thee  
 And thy unselfish love, thy sacrifice,  
 Which brings heaven daily nearer to  
 our eyes,

Men whom the rude world stains, men  
 chilled by doubt,  
 Would find no ray of Deity  
 To fire a Faith gone out.

Our life from a twofold root  
 Springs upwards to the sky,  
 One, surface only, shared with tree and  
 brute,  
 And one, as deep and strong as heaven  
 is high.

Spirit and sense,  
 Each bears its part and dwells in inno-  
 cence

Yet only grown together can they bear  
 The one consummate fruit.

The flower is good, the flower is fair,  
 But holds no lasting sweetness in its  
 petals thin,

No seed of life within.

But the ripe fruit within its orb'd gold  
 Doth hidden secrets hold ;

Within its honied wells set safe and  
 deep,

The Future lies asleep.

Of shamefastness our being is born,  
 Of shamefastness and scorn.

Oh, wonder, that so high dost soar !

Oh, vision, blest for evermore !

With every throe of birth

Two glorious Presences make glad the  
 earth

The stainless mother and the Eternal  
 Child.

Of the heart comes love, of the heart  
 and not the brain ;

To heights where Thought comes not  
 can Love attain :

We cannot tell at all, we may not  
 know,

How to such stature high our lower  
 natures grow ;

What strong instinctive thrill

The mother's being doth fill,

And raises it from miry common ways,  
 Up to such heights of love.

We cannot tell what blessed forces  
 move,

And so transform the careless girlish  
 heart

To bear so high a part.

We cannot tell ; we can but praise.

Fair motherhood, by every childish  
 tongue

Thy eulogy is sung.

In every passing age

The theme of seer and sage :

The painters saw thee in a life-long  
 dream ;

The painters who have left a world  
 more fair

Than ever days of nymph and goddess  
 were—

Blest company, who now for centuries  
 Have fixed the virgin mother for our  
 eyes—

The painters saw thee sitting brown or  
 fair,

Under the Tuscan vines or colder  
 Northern air ;

They saw pure love transform thy  
 peasant gaze ;

They saw thy reverent eyes, thy young  
 amaze

And left thee Queen of Heaven, wearing  
 a crown

Of glory ; and abased at thy sweet  
 breast,

Spurning his robes of kingship down,  
 The God-child laid at rest.

They found thee, and they fixed thee  
 for our eyes ;

But every day that goes

Before the gazer new Madonnas rise.  
 What matter if the cheek show not the  
     rose,  
 Nor look divine is there nor queenly  
     grace?  
 The mother's glory lights the homely  
     face.  
 In every land beneath the circling sun  
 Thy praise is never done.  
 Whatever men may doubt, they put  
     their trust in thee ;  
 Rude souls and coarse, to whom  
     virginity  
 Seems a dead thing and cold,  
 So always was it from the days of old ;  
 So shall it be while yet our race doth  
     last ;  
 Though truth be sought no more and  
     faith be past,  
 Still, till all hope of heaven be dead,  
 Thy praises shall be said.

Aye, thou art ours, or wert, ere yet  
 The loss we ne'er forget,  
 The loss which comes to all who reach  
     life's middle way  
 We see thee by the childish bed  
 Sit patient all night long,  
 To cool the parching lips of throbbing  
     head ;  
 We hear thee still with simple song  
 Or sweet hymn lull the wakeful eyes  
     to sleep ;  
 Through every turning of life's  
     chequered page,  
 Joying with those who joy, weeping  
     with those who weep.  
 Oh, sainted love ! oh, precious  
     sacrifice !  
 Oh, heaven-lighted eyes !  
 Best dream of early youth, best memory  
     of age !

## III. LABOUR.

They do the Maker wrong  
 Who with the closing days of youth  
 Shut fast the gate of Song ;  
 Nor ever shall I hold it truth,  
 With those who feign to tell the tale of  
     life,  
 That only love is worth, the love that  
     binds  
 A youth and maid, nor care at all  
 For the long summer ere the fruit shall  
     fall,  
 And deem unfit for song the glorious  
     strife,  
 The joy of toil and thought, the clash  
     of vigorous minds,  
 When knowledge flies before and we  
     pursue,  
 And who the Fair once followed,  
     follow now the True.

Ah, full fair life ! if something we have  
     lost,  
 If never more again  
 We feel the ancient joy, the former pain,  
 If no more passion-tost  
 Upon the tides of life we hurry by,  
 The white waves laughing as we plunge  
     along,  
 Nor watch the light clouds drift along  
     the sky,  
 While the glad South snatches us swift  
     and strong  
 To some blest isle beyond the purple  
     wave,  
 Where Love is Queen and Mirth, nor  
     Prudence grave  
 Nor Wisdom frowns, but to be glad is all,  
 From jocund morn till dewy evening  
     fall ;  
 Oh, if that sky is dark—those winds  
     are still—

Another day has risen : again from the  
East

Our treasure is increased ;  
And as the orient Lord begins to grow,  
New airs begin to blow ;  
And on the calm majestic tide,  
Our full-sailed galleon comes to glide,  
Love, with its little skiff, has gone,  
But Life's great bark sails on.

Toil is the law of life, and its best  
fruit :

This from the uncaring brute  
Divides ;—this and the prescient mind  
whose store  
Grows daily more and more.  
Toil is the mother of wealth,  
The nurse of health ;  
Toil 'tis that gives the zest  
To well-earned rest ;  
The law of life laid broad and deep  
As are the fixed foundations of the sea,  
The medicine of grief, the remedy,  
Wherefrom Life giveth his beloved  
sleep.

Oh, labour truly blest !  
Thou rulest all the race ;  
Over all the toiling earth I see thy  
gracious face  
Stand forth confest.  
Wherever thou art least,  
In those fair lands beneath the tropic  
blaze,  
The slothful savage, likened to the  
beast,  
Drags on his soulless length of days ;  
Where most thou art,  
Man rises upward to a loftier height,  
And views the earth and heaven with  
clearer sight,  
And holds a cleaner heart.

I see the toilers with the awaking morn,  
Ere yet the day is born,

Go forth to labour over all the earth.  
In northern darkness, 'midst the wintry  
rain,

The great bell clangs thro' the smoke-  
laden air ;

And ere light comes the workers  
gather there,

While the great engines throb, the  
swift wheels turn,

And the long, sickly gaslights flare and  
burn ;

I hear the slow winch creak above the  
pit,

While the black workers, who have  
toiled all night,

Rise, dazed, to rest and light ;

I see the fisher on the waking sea ;

The great ship, full-manned, heaving  
silently

Across the foam ; reapers in yellow  
corn ;

The frosty shepherd in the early morn ;  
The naked worker bent among the  
cane

Or cotton ; the vinedresser, lean and  
brown ;

The thousand labours of the busy town ;  
The myriad trades which in each clime  
and race

Build up man's dwelling-place ;

I see the countless toiling multitude ;

And all I see is good.

But to ends nobler still

The nobler workers of the world are  
bent.

It is not best in an inglorious ease

To sink and dull content,

When wild revolts and hopeless  
miseries

The unquiet nations fill ;

It is not best to rot  
 In dull observance, while the bitter cry  
 Of weak and friendless sufferers rends  
     the sky,  
 Wailing their hopeless lot ;  
 Or rest in coward fear on former gain,  
 Making old joys supply the present  
     pain.

Nay, best it is indeed  
 To spend ourselves upon the general  
     good ;  
 And, oft misunderstood,  
 To strive to lift the knees and limbs  
     that bleed ;—  
 This is the best, the fullest meed.  
 Let ignorance assail or hatred sneer ;  
 Who loves his race he shall not fear ;  
 He suffers not for long,  
 Who doth his soul possess in loving,  
     and grows strong.

Oh, student ! far into the night  
 From youth to age  
 Bent low upon the blinding page,  
 Content to catch some gleam of light ;  
 Art thou not happy, though the world  
     pass by ?—  
 Happy though Honours seek thee not,  
     nor Fame,  
 And no man knows thy name ?—  
 Happy in that blest company of old  
 Whose names are writ in characters of  
     gold  
 Upon the rocks of Time, the glorious  
     band  
 Who on the shining mountains stand,  
 Thinker and jurist, hard or seer,  
 Whatever name is brightest and most  
     dear ?

Or thou with docile hand,  
 Obedient to the visionary eye,

Who 'midst art's precious work dost  
     choose to stand  
 Amid the great ones of the days gone  
     by.

Oh, blest and glorious lot, always to be  
 With dreams of beauty compassed  
     round about !

The godlike mother and the child  
     divine,

Or land or sea or sky, in calm or  
     storm,

Nature's sincerest verities of form--  
 To see from canvas or from marble  
     shine,

Little by little orbing gradually,  
 Some trace of hidden Godhead gleam-  
     ing out !

Or who, from heart and brain inspired,  
     create,

Defying time, defying fate,  
 Some deathless theme and high,  
 Some verse which cannot die,  
 Some lesson which shall still be said  
 Altho' their tongue be lost and dead ;  
 Or who, in daily labour's trivial round,  
 Their fitting work have found ;  
 Or who on high, guiding the car of  
     State,

Are set, a people's envy and their pride,  
 Who, spurning rank and ease and  
     wealth,

And setting pleasure aside and health,  
 And meeting contumely oft and hate,  
 Have lived laborious lives and all too  
     early died.

Or shall I silence keep  
 Of you, oh ministering women fair,  
 Who, while the world lies sunk in care-  
     less sleep,  
 Still for the love of God and man can  
     bear

To watch by alien sick-beds, and to guard

With little hope and scant reward,  
Midst misery and foul infected air,  
The friendless and the dying? Shall I dare

To sing of labour's meed, nor hold you dear?

Dear souls, your joys are great, and yet not wholly here;

In heaven they blossom best and grow complete,

And beautiful upon the eternal mountains are your feet.

Ay, labour, thou art blest.

From all the earth, thy voice, a constant prayer,

Soars upward day and night:

A voice of aspiration after right;

A voice of effort yearning for its rest;

A voice of high hope conquering despair!

#### IV. REST.

There is a joy in rest;

There is a joy to cease and to be still.

This is the remedy of all the best,

To cure the pain of too laborious will.

Ah! it is sweet to lie reclined,

Reaping the fallow mind,

When all the sweat and drouth of day is done,

And a cool breeze breathes from the setting sun.

The toiler sits before his cottage door,  
Set with musk-roses round, and eglantine,

In dewy, scented, twilight-glooms divine,

When all the trouble of the week is o'er,

And sabbath rest comes with the evening sun:

The joyous shouts come up from pool or green;

Round the white chestnut-spikes the beetles hum;

And down the hawthorn-haunted byways come

The loitering lovers, hardly seen

Till springs aloft the clear, large moon  
Of pleasant June.

Or by the palm-thatched hut at shut of eve,  
The dusky toilers lie, when the red sun  
Is sinking or has gone.

A cool wind rises landward from the sea;  
The fire-flies glance like silver in the palm;

On the fringed shore the thundering rollers heave;

And all the simple souls are full of glee,  
And the fair earth of calm.

Or on the hot and trackless sand,

In the sweet dying day,

Beyond the unknown monuments of the dead,

The last muezzin calls, the prayers are said,

And turbaned faces stern relax a while

To some unwonted smile,

Watching the large-eyed children at their play.

Or maybe busy brains, which day by day  
Life's struggle frets away,

Weary with fierce pursuit of fame or wealth,

And prizing only health;

Over the joyous wave in some swift boat,

White-winged, delight to float

From land to land upon the tideless sea;  
Borne careless still and free



By hoary cape and gleaming southern town,  
 And many an islet clothed with palm and vine,  
 And on the wine-dark sea-depths looking down,  
 High based on wave-worn fronts, the marble shrine ;  
 Or see the white town flush with dying day,  
 And the red mountain fire the glimmering bay.

Or maybe on the icy hill they creep  
 Above the pines, across the frozen sea,  
 Whose blue abysses bare the unfathomed deep ;  
 Each to the other bound, and silently,  
 Fearful lest some chance step or spoken word,  
 The avalanche trembling downward may have stirred ;  
 And up the giddy height  
 Little by little, gaining slow,  
 They gradually go,  
 Till with hard toil of knee and hand,  
 On the white summit panting but content,  
 With full hearts throbbing high and forces spent,  
 At last the climbers stand ;  
 For this of old is sure,  
 That change of toil is toil's sufficient cure.

Or by the lovely classic shore,  
 The traveller sees with wondering eyes  
 The treasure-house of art ; the store  
 Of gracious memories  
 Left by some cunning vanished hand,  
 At whose supreme command  
 The spirit of beauty rose and did appear :  
 The angel with the lily : the poor maid,  
 Submissive, yet afraid ;

The fair Madonnas mild ;  
 The deep ineffable Child ;  
 The sweet boy-angels singing high and clear ;  
 The lady with the mystic smile ;  
 The kneeling Magi from the fabled East ;  
 The blessed Presence at the sacred feast ;  
 And many a virgin martyr sweet,  
 And many a youthful saint,  
 Gazing from heavenly eyes and free of guile ;  
 Who, when the tortured life began to faint,  
 Looking in agony above,  
 Saw the heavens opened, and the Paraclete  
 Descending like a dove.

Or maybe under secular trees  
 Old when his ancestors were young,  
 The statesman, in the golden autumn, sees  
 New glories for the eloquent tongue,  
 New triumphs gained against the banded night  
 Of selfishness and fear, new struggles for the right ;  
 And in the falling evening and the sad  
 Short light of waning days,  
 Illumes his soul with subtle inward rays,  
 And grows sedately glad.

These thy refreshments are, oh blest  
 And necessary Rest !  
 Peaceful delights, which bear not soil and fret  
 As do the victories of toil, and yet  
 Bear their own fruit exceeding fair :  
 Renewal of the labouring mind,  
 New hopes, new dawns, and carking care  
 A black night left behind.

THE ODE OF GOOD.

ETERNAL Spring, and Source  
Of happiness and weal !  
Indwelling and unfailing Force !  
Who dost Thyself reveal  
In every jocund day, and restful night ;  
In every dawn serenely bright ;  
In every tide of yearning which doth roll,  
Heavenward, some growing soul !

What were life save for Thee  
But pain and misery --  
To have no more longing, but to be  
Below the brute, below the tree,  
Below the little stone, or speck of dust,  
Which are themselves, and are made  
just,  
Conforming to the law which bade them  
grow,  
Not dreaming dreams of heaven in their  
estate so low !

The calm brutes live and are,  
Tranquil and unafraid,  
Keeping their nature only ; the faint  
star  
Pursues its orbit always though of Thee  
It knows not, yet its vast periphery  
Is ordered by Thy hand ; by Thee were  
laid  
The fixed foundations of the unfathomed  
sea ;--  
All these obey Thee, though they may  
not know  
What law it is that holds them. Man  
alone  
Sees Thee, and knowing Thee, averts  
his face,  
And yet is higher than all for his disgrace,  
Which were impossible to brute, or tree,  
or stone.

How shall a finite voice  
Praise Thee who art too high for any  
praise,  
Great Scheme, that by eternal, perfect  
ways  
Farest and dost rejoice !  
Thou wert before Life was, or Ill.  
Thou rulest all things still ;  
The Governance and Regimen are Thine,  
Oh Plenitude divine !  
Of all the countless orbs that roll  
Through all Thy infinite space.  
We are through Thee alone, each in its  
place,  
Organic, Inorganic, great and small ;  
Thou dost inspire and keep us all ;--  
Earth, sky, and sea ; herb, tree, insect,  
and brute ;  
All Thy created excellences mute,  
To Man of large discourse, and the un-  
dying soul.

We know not by what Name our  
tongues shall call  
Thee or Thy Essence, nor can Thought  
as yet  
Gain those ineffable heights where Thou  
art set,  
As from a watch-tower guarding all.  
Thou girdest Thyself round with mys-  
tery,  
As Thy great sun behind an embattled  
cloud,  
Or some wrapt summit, never seen ;  
Yet Thy veiled presence cheers us on  
our road.  
With eyes bent down too much on earth  
and bowed,  
We toil and do forget  
All but our daily labour and its lead ;  
Yet art Thou there the while, felt yet  
unseen,

Oh universal Good, and Thy great Will  
 Directs our footsteps still—  
 Directs them, though they come to stray  
 From Thy appointed perfect way ;  
 Lights them, though for a while they  
     wander far,  
 Led by some feeble baleful star,  
 Which can allure them when the blind-  
     ing fold  
 Of mist is on the hill side, and the cold  
 Clouds which make green our lives,  
     descending, hide  
 Death's steeps on every side.

We know not what Thou art—  
 Whether the Word of some all-perfect  
     Will  
 Inborn and nourished in each human  
     heart,  
 Some hidden and mysterious good,  
 Obeyed, not understood ;  
 Or whether the harmonious note  
 Of some world-symphony divine,  
 To which the perfect Scheme of things,  
 Ever advancing perfectly  
 To high fulfilment, sings.  
 We know not what Thou art, and yet  
     we love ;  
 We know not where Thou dwell'st, yet  
     still above  
 We turn our eyes to Thee, knowing  
     Thou wilt take  
 Our yearnings and wilt treasure them,  
     and make  
 Our little lives fulfil themselves and  
     Thee :  
 And in this trust we bear to be.

Oh Light so white and pure,  
 Oft clouded and yet sure !  
 Oh inner Radiance of the heart,  
 That drawest all men, whatsoe'er Thou  
     art !

Spring of the soul, that dost remove  
 Winter with rays of love,  
 And dost dispel of Thy far-working  
     might  
 The clouds of Ill and Night,  
 For every soul which cometh to the  
     earth ;  
 That beamest on us at our birth,  
 And paling somewhat in life's grosser  
     day,  
 Lightest, a pillar of fire, our evening  
     way ;  
 What matter by what Name  
 We call Thee?—still art Thou the  
     same,  
 God call we Thee, or Good,—still  
     through the strife  
 Unchangeable alone, of all our change-  
     ful life,  
 With awe-struck souls we seek Thee, we  
     adore  
 Thy greatness ever more and more,  
 We turn to Thee with worship, till at  
     last,  
 Our journey well-nigh past,  
 When now our day of Life draws to its  
     end,  
 Looking, with less of awe and more of  
     love,  
 To Thy high throne above,  
 We see no dazzling brightness as of old,  
 No kingly splendours cold,  
 But the sweet Presence of a heavenly  
     Friend.

### THE ODE OF EVIL.

OH, who shall sing of Life and not of  
     Ill?  
 The essence of our will  
 Is fullest liberty to stray,  
 From out the green and blessed way,

Amid the desert wastes of drought and death.

This is the power that makes us free,  
This of our Being is the penalty ;  
And maybe the Eternal Will,  
Clothing itself with form to bid Creation  
    be,  
Took to itself some boundary, and  
    awhile,  
Self-limited, made vile  
And subjected to Law the Majesty  
Which all the Universe of Space did fill.

Evil is Life,  
The conflict of great laws pervading  
    space ;  
Evil is strife.  
Which keeps the creature in its ordered  
    place.  
If any hand divine should e'er with-  
    draw  
The fixed coercive potency of Law,  
Surely the Universe of things would fade  
And cease and be unmade.  
Where Law is, there is Good,  
And freedom to obey or to transgress ;  
Else 'twere no Law, but, weaker far  
    and less,  
If one created soul might not the thing  
    it would.

Young lives spring up and fade,  
Wither and are opprest,"  
Toil takes the world, and pain,  
And all the things that God has made  
Travail and groan and fain would be at  
    rest,  
And Wrong prevails again.  
And we—we lift a hopeless eye  
Up to the infinite sky,  
Mourning the Ill that is, and shall be  
    yet,  
Weak creatures who forget

The very law and root of Life,  
That it is sown in pain and nursed in  
    woe and strife.

The evil blight of war  
Torments the race from age to age,  
And man slays man through all the  
    years that are,  
And savage lust and brutal rage  
Deform this glorious heritage of earth.  
We shudder and grow faint,  
Knowing the dim fair dreams of seer  
    and saint  
Show thin and little worth.  
The young life, rising, sinks in sloughs  
    of sense,  
And wanders and is lost.  
Alas ! for days of young-eyed innocence.  
Alas ! for the calm hours ere, passion-  
    crost,  
The young soul grew, a white flower  
    sweet and pure.  
Yet not the less 'tis sure  
That not in tranquil zones of endless  
    calm  
Grows best the victor's palm,  
But blown by circling storms which  
    blot the sky,  
Nor fitting were it to the eye  
Always to look upon a cloudless sun,—  
Grown blind with too much light before  
    the journey done.

The victories of Right  
Are born of strife.  
There were no Day were there no  
    Night,  
Nor, without dying, Life.  
There only doth Right triumph, where  
    the Wrong  
Is mightiest and most strong ;  
There were no Good, indeed, were there  
    no Ill.

And when the final victory shall come,  
Burst forth, oh Awful Sun, and draw  
Creation home.

Not within Time or Space  
Lines drawn in opposite ways grow  
one,  
But in some Infinite place  
Before the Eternal throne ;  
There, ways to-day divergent, Right  
and Wrong,  
Approach the nearer that they grow  
more long.  
There at the Eternal feet,  
Fused, joined, and grown complete,  
The circle rounds itself, the enclosing  
wall  
Of the Universe sinks down, and God  
is all in all !

### THE ODE OF AGE.

THERE is a sweetness in autumnal  
days,  
Which many a lip doth praise ;  
When the earth, tired a little and grown  
mute  
Of song, and having borne its fruit,  
Rests for a little space ere winter come.  
It is not sad to turn the face towards  
home,  
Even though it shows the journey  
nearly done ;  
It is not sad to mark the westering  
sun,  
Even though we know the imminent  
night doth come.  
Silence there is, indeed, for song,  
Twilight for noon ;  
But for the steadfast soul and strong  
Life's autumn is as June.

As June itself, but clearer, calmer far ;  
Here come no passion-gusts to mar,  
No thunder-clouds or rains to beat  
To earth the blossoms and the wheat.  
No high tumultuous noise  
Of youth's self-seeking joys,  
But a cold radiance white  
As the moon shining on a frosty night.

To-morrow is as yesterday, scant  
change,  
Little of new or strange,  
No glamour of false hope to daze,  
Nor glory to amaze,  
Even the old passionate love of love or  
child

A temperate affection mild,  
And ever the recurring thought  
Returning, though unsought :  
How strange the Scheme of Things !  
how brief a span  
The little life of man !  
And ever as we mark them, fleet and  
more fleet,  
The days and months and years, gliding  
with winged feet.

And ever as the hair grows grey,  
And the eyes dim,  
And the lithe form which toiled the  
live-long day,  
The stalwart limb,  
Begin to stiffen and grow slow,  
A higher joy we know :  
To spend the remnant of the waning  
year,  
Ere comes the deadly chill,  
In works of mercy, and to cheer  
The feet which toil against life's rugged  
hill ;  
To have known the trouble and the fret,  
To have known it, and to cease.

In a pervading peace,  
Too calm to suffer pain, too living to  
forget,  
And reaching down a succouring hand  
To where the sufferers are,  
To lift them to the tranquil heights afar,  
Whereon Time's conquerors stand.

And when the fruitful hours are done,  
How sweet at set of sun  
To gather up the fair laborious day !—  
To have struck some blow for right  
With tongue or pen ;  
To have smoothed the path to light  
For wandering men ;  
To have chased some fiend of Ill away ;  
A little backward to have thrust  
The instant powers of Drink and Lust,  
To have borne down gaunt Despair,  
To have dealt a blow at Care !  
How sweet to light again the glow  
Of hotter fires than youth's, tho' all the  
blood runs slow !

Oh ! is there any joy,  
Of all that come to girl or boy  
Or manhood's calmer weal and ease,  
To vie with these ?  
Here is some sitting profit day by day,  
Which nought can render less ;  
Some glorious gain Fate cannot take  
away,  
Nor Time depress.  
Oh, brother, fainting on your road !  
Poor sister, whom the righteous shun !  
There comes for you, ere life and  
strength be done,  
An arm to bear your load.  
A feeble body, maybe bent, and old,  
But bearing 'midst the chills of age  
A deeper glow than youth's ; a nobler  
rage ;  
A calm heart yet not cold.

A man or woman, weak perhaps, and  
spent,  
To whom pursuit of gold or fame  
Is as a fire grown cold, an empty name,  
Whom thoughts of Love no more allure,  
Who in a self-made nunnery dwell,  
A cloistered calm and pure,  
A beatific peace greater than tongue can  
tell.

And sweet it is to take,  
With something of the eager haste of  
youth,  
Some fainter glimpse of Truth  
For its own sake ;  
To observe the ways of bee, or plant,  
or bird ;  
To trace in Nature the ineffable Word,  
Which by the gradual wear of secular  
time,  
Has worked its work sublime ;  
To have touched, with strenuous grop-  
ings dim,  
Nature's extremest outward rim ;  
To have found some weed or shell un-  
known before ;  
To advance Thought's infinite march a  
footpace more ;  
To make or to declare laws just and  
sage ;  
These are the joys of Age.

Or by the evening hearth, in the old  
chair,  
With children's children at our knees,  
So like, yet so unlike the little ones of  
old—  
Some little lad with curls of gold,  
Some little maid demurely fair,  
To sit, girt round with ease,  
And feel how sweet it is to live,  
Careless what fate may give ;  
To think, with gentle yearning mind,

Of dear souls who have crossed the Infinite Sea ;  
 To muse with cheerful hope of what shall be  
 For those we leave behind  
 When the night comes which knows no earthly morn ;  
 Yet mingled with the young in hopes and scars,  
 And bringing from the treasure-house of years  
 Some fair-set counsel long-time worn ;  
 To let the riper days of life,  
 The tumult and the strife,  
 Go by, and in their stead  
 Dwell with the living past, so living, yet so dead :  
 The mother's kiss upon the sleeper's brow,  
 The little fish caught from the brook,  
 The dead child-sister's gentle voice and look,  
 The school-days and the father's parting hand ;  
 The days so far removed, yet oh ! so near,  
 So full of precious memories dear ;  
 The wonder of flying Time, so hard to understand !

Not in clear eye or ear  
 Dwells our chief profit here.  
 We are not as the brutes, who fade and make no sign ;  
 We are sustained where'er we go,  
 In happiness and woe,  
 By some indwelling faculty divine,  
 Which lifts us from the deep  
 Of falling senses dim, and duller brain,  
 And wafts us back to youth again ;  
 And as a vision fair dividing sleep,  
 Pierces the vasts behind, the voids before,

And opens to us an invisible gate,  
 And sets our winged footsteps, scorning  
 Time and Fate,  
 At the celestial door.

### THE ODE OF DECLINE.

WITH forces well-nigh spent,  
 Uneasy or in pain,  
 Or brought to childish weakness once again,  
 With bodies shrunk and bent,  
 We come, if Fate so will, to cold decrepit age.  
 The book of Life lies open at its latest page.

Only four score of summers, and four score  
 Of winters, nothing more,  
 And then 'tis done.  
 We have spent our fruitful days beneath the sun ;  
 We come to a cold season and a bare,  
 Where little is sweet or fair.  
 We, who a few brief years ago,  
 Would passionately go  
 Across the fields of life to meet the morn,  
 We are content, content and not forlorn,  
 To lie upon our beds, and watch the Day  
 Which kissed the Eastern peaks, grow gradually grey.

Great Heaven, that Thou hast made  
 our lives so brief  
 And swiftly spent !  
 We toil our little day and are content,  
 Though Time, the thief,  
 Stands at our side, and smiles his mystic smile.

We joy a little, we grieve a little while ;  
 We gain some little glimpse of Thy  
     great laws,  
 Rolling in thunder through the voids  
     of space ;  
 We gain to look a moment on Thy  
     face,  
 Eternal Source and Cause !  
 And then, the night descending as a  
     cloud,  
 We walk with aspect bowed,  
 And turn to earth and see our Life  
     grow dark.  
 Was it for this the fiery spark  
 Of Thy Eternal Self, sown on the vast  
 And infinite abysses of the Past,  
 Revealed itself and made Creation rise  
 Before Thy Eternal Mind :  
 This little span of life, with purblind  
     eyes  
 That grow completely blind ;  
 This little force of brain,  
 Holding dim thoughts sublime,  
 Too weak to withstand the treacheries  
     of Time ;  
 This body bent and bowed in twain,  
 Soon racked by growing pain,  
 Which briefer far than is the life of the  
     tree,  
 Springs as a flower and fades, and then  
     must rot  
 And perish and be not,  
 Passing from mystery to mystery ?

It is a pain  
 To move through the old fields,—even  
     though they lie  
 Before our eyes, we know that never  
     again,  
 Where once our daily feet were used to  
     pass  
 Amid the crested grass,  
 We any more shall wander till we die ;

Nor to the old grey church, with the  
     tall spire,  
 Whose vane the sunsets fire,  
 Where once a little child, by kind hands  
     led,  
 Would spell the scant memorials of the  
     dead,—  
 Never again, or once alone,  
 When pain and Time are done.

The soaring thoughts of youth  
 Are dead and cold, the victories of  
     Thought  
 Are no more prized or sought  
 By eyes which draw too near the face  
     of Truth.  
 Whatever fruit or gain  
 Fate held in store,  
 To tempt the growing soul or brain,  
 Allures no more.  
 It is as the late Autumn, when the  
     fields  
 Are bare of flower or fruit ;  
 Nor charm nor profit the swept surface  
     yields,  
 Sullen and mute ;  
 So that a doubting mind might come to  
     hold  
 The very soul and life were dead and  
     cold.

But who can peer  
 Into another soul, or tell at all  
 What hidden energies befall  
 The aged lingering here ?  
 When all the weary brain  
 Seems dull, the immeasurable fields of  
     life  
 Lie open to the memory, and again  
 They know the youthful joys, the  
     hurry and the strife,  
 And feel, but gentler now, the ancient  
     pain.



In the uneasy vigils of the night,  
 Before the tardy light ;  
 Or, lonely days, when no young lives  
     are by,  
 There come such long processions of  
     the dead,  
 The buried lives and hopes of far-off  
     years,  
 Spent joys and dried-up tears,  
 That round them stands a blessed  
     company, !  
 Holding high converse, though no  
     word be said,  
 Till only what is past and gone doth  
     seem  
 To live, and all the Present is a dream.

So may the wintry earth,  
 Holding her precious seeds within the  
     ground,  
 Pause for the coming birth,  
 When like a trumpet-note the Spring  
     shall sound ;  
 So may the roots which, buried deep  
 And safe within her sleep,  
 Whisper as 'twere, within, tales of the  
     sun,—  
 Whisper of leaf and flower, of bee and  
     bird,—  
 Till by a sudden glory stirred,  
 A mystic influence bids them rise,  
 Bursting the narrow sheath  
 And cerement of death,  
 And bloom as lilies again beneath the  
     recovered skies.

### THE ODE OF CHANGE.

I HAVE come to the time of the failing  
     of breath ;  
 I have reached the cold threshold of  
     Death !

Death ! there is not any Death ; only  
     infinite change,  
 Only a place of life which is novel and  
     strange.

Change ! there is naught but change  
     and renewal of strife,  
 Which make up the infinite changes  
     we sum up in life.

Life ! what is life, that it ceases with  
     ceasing of breath ?

Death ! what were Life without change,  
     but an infinite Death ?

As I lie on my bed, and the sun, like  
     a furnace of fire,

Burns amid the old pines in the west,  
     ere the last ray expire,

Can I dream he will rise no more, but  
     a fathomless night

Shall brood o'er Creation for ever, and  
     shut out the light ?

It is done, this Day of our Life ; but  
     another shall rise,

Day for ever following Day, in the  
     infinite skies,

Day following Day for ever !

Day following day, with the starlit  
     darkness between ;

Or, maybe in a world where Dawn  
     comes, ere our sunset has been ;

Day following Day for ever !

For ever ! though who shall tell in  
     what seeming or where ?

In what far-off secret space of God's  
     limitless air ?

It matters nothing at all what we are  
     or where set,

If a spark of the Infinite Light can  
     shine on us yet.

Life following Life for ever !

Life following Life for ever ! for what  
if the Sun  
Grew chilled, and the Universe cold,  
and the orbits undone,  
And all the great globes should fall  
back into chaos once more ;  
They would wake at a glance of the  
Light, as they awakened before.  
There is no Death for ever !

Cease ! but how should we cease while  
God's light shall remain ?  
He that has lighted Life's flame shall  
light it again !  
What if He take back for a while, as  
the Sun from the Sea,  
Some spark of the radiance divine that  
bade all things to be ?  
We rest in Him, we are sunk, we are  
folded in Him, but we are :  
As the star which draws near to the Sun  
is obscured, but is still a star.  
There is only Change for ever !

Shall I fear that I shall be changed and  
no more shall be I ?—  
I who know not what 'tis that I am, to  
live or to die ?  
Nay, while God is, I too must be, else  
too weak were His hand ;  
The created is part of His essence,—  
how else could the Maker stand ?  
There is no Death for ever !

Take me, oh infinite Cause, and cleanse  
me of wrong !  
Take me, raise me to higher Being  
through centuries long !  
Cleanse me, by pain, if need be,  
through aeons of days !  
Take me and purge me, still I will  
answer with praise—  
There is no Death for ever !

Shall I mourn for those who are not  
Nay, while love and regret  
Still linger within our souls, they live  
with us yet.  
If we love, then the souls that we love,  
they exist and they are,  
As memory which makes us ourselves,  
brings precious things from far.  
Love lives and is for ever !

We are part of an Infinite Scheme,  
All we that are ;  
Man the high crest and crown of  
things that be,  
The fiery-hearted earth, the cold un-  
fathomed sea,  
The central sun, the intermittent star.  
Things great and small,  
We are but parts of the Eternal All ;  
We live not in a barren, baseless  
dream ;  
No endless, ineffectual chain  
Of chance successions launched in  
vain ;

But every beat of Time,  
Each sun that shines or fails to shine,  
Each animate life that comes to throb  
or cease,  
Each life of herb or tree  
Which blooms and fruits and then  
forgets to be,  
Each change of strife and peace,  
Each soaring thought sublime,  
Each deed of wrong and blood,  
Each impulse towards an unattained  
good,—  
All with a sure, unfaltering working  
tend  
To one Ineffable, Beatific End.  
Oh hidden Scheme, perfect Thyself,  
and take  
Our petty lives, and mould them as  
Thou wilt !

All things that are, are only for Thy  
sake,  
And not to obey Thee is our only  
guilt!  
Perfect Thyself, and be fulfilled, oh  
great  
Unfathomable Will, who art our Life  
and Fate!

There is hope, but nothing of fear,  
Nought but a patient mind,  
For him who waits with conscience  
clear  
And soul resigned

Whate'er the mystic coming change  
Shall bring of new and strange.  
He looks back once upon the fields of  
life,  
The good and evil locked in strife,  
The happy and the unhappy days,  
The Right we always love, the oft-  
triumphant Wrong;  
And all his Being to a secret song  
Sings with a mighty and unfaltering  
voice—  
"I have been; Thou hast done all  
things well; I am glad; I give  
thanks; I rejoice!"

## SONGS UNSUNG.

### PICTURES—I.

ABOVE the abysmal undivided deep  
A train of glory streaming from afar;  
And in the van, to wake the worlds  
from sleep,  
One on whose forehead shines the  
Morning-Star.

Long-rolling surges of a falling sea,  
Smiting the sheer cliffs of an unknown  
shore;  
And by a fanged rock, swaying help-  
lessly  
A mast with broken cordage—nothing  
more.

Three peaks, one loftier, all in virgin  
white,  
Poised high in cloudland when the day  
is done,  
And on the mid-most, far above the night,  
The rose-red of the long-departed sun.

A wild girl reeling, helpless, like to fall,  
Down a hushed street at dawn in mid-  
summer;  
And one who had clean forgot their  
past and all,  
From a lit palace casement pities her.

A young man, only clothed with youth's  
first bloom,  
In mien and form an angel, not in eye;

Hard by, a fell worm crawling from a tomb,  
And one, wide-eyed, who cries, "The Enemy!"

A lake of molten fires which swell and surge  
And fall in thunders on the burning verge;  
And one a queen rapt, with illumined face,  
Who doth defy the Goddess of the place.

Eros beneath a red-cupped tree, asleep,  
And 'mid the flowers, and thro' the air above,  
Fair boys with silver wings who smiling peep  
Upon the languid loosened limbs of love.

A darkling gateway, thronged with entering ghosts,  
And a grave janitor, who seems to say:  
"Woe, woe to youth, to life, which idly boasts;  
I am the End, and mine the appointed Way."

A young Faun making music on a reed,  
Deep in a leafy dell in Arcady:  
Three girl-nymphs fair, in musing thought take heed  
Of the strange youth's mysterious melody.

A flare of lamplight in a shameful place  
Full of wild revel and unchecked offence,  
And in the midst, one fresh scarce-sullied face,  
Within her eyes, a dreadful innocence.

A quire of seraphs, chanting row on row,  
With lute and viol and high trumpet notes;  
And, above all, their soft young eyes aglow—  
Child angels, making laud from full clear throats.

Some, on a cliff at dawn, in agony;  
Below, a scaly horror on the sea,  
Lashing the leaden surge. Fast-bound, a maid  
Waits on the verge, alone, but unafraid.

A poisonous, dead, sad sea-marsh,  
fringed with pine,  
Scarce lit by mouldering churches, old as Time;  
Beyond, on high, just touched with wintry rime,  
The long chain of the autumnal Apennine.

A god-like Presence, beautiful as Dawn,  
Watching, upon an untrodden summit white,

The Earth's last day grow full, and  
fade in night ;  
Then, with a sigh, the Presence is  
withdrawn.

---

A sheer rock-islet, frowning on the sea  
Where no ship sails, nor ever life may  
be :

Thousands of leagues around, from pole  
to pole,  
The unbounded lonely ocean-currents  
roll.

---

Young maids who wander on a flower-  
lit lawn,  
In springtide of their lives as of the  
year ;  
Meanwhile, unnoticed, swift, a thing  
of fear,  
Across the sun, a deadly shadow drawn.

---

Slow, hopeless, overborne, without a  
word,  
Two issuing, as if from Paradise ;  
Behind them, stern, and with unpitying  
eyes,  
Their former selves, wielding a two-  
edged sword.

---

A weary woman tricked with gold and  
gem,  
Wearing some strange barbaric diadem,  
Scorn on her lips, and, like a hidden fire,  
Within her eyes cruel unslaked desire.

---

Two aged figures, poor, and blurred  
with tears ;  
Their child, a bold proud woman,  
sweeping by ;  
A hard cold face, which pities not nor  
fears,  
And all contempt and evil in her eye.

---

Around a harpsichord, a blue-eyed  
throng  
Of long-dead children, rapt in sounds  
devout,  
In some old grange, while on that  
silent song  
The sabbath twilight fades, and stars  
come out.

---

The end of things created ; Dreadful  
night,  
Advancing swift on sky, and earth, and  
sea ;  
But at the zenith a departing light,  
A soaring countless blessed company !

### THE LESSON OF TIME.

LEAD thou me, Spirit of the World,  
and I  
Will follow where thou leadest, will-  
ingly ;  
Not with the careless sceptic's idle  
mood,  
Nor blindly seeking some unreal good ;  
For I have come, long since to that full  
day  
Whose morning mists have fled and  
curled away—

That breathless afternoon-tide when  
the Sun  
Halts, as it were, before his journey  
done,

Calm as a river broadening toward the  
main,  
Which never plunges down the rocks  
again,  
But, clearly mirrored in its tranquil  
deep,  
Holds tower and spire and forest as in  
sleep.

How old and worn the metaphor ap-  
pears,  
Old as the tale of passing hopes and  
fears !  
New as the springtide air, which day  
by day  
Breathes on young lives, and speeds  
them on their way.

The Roman knew it, and the Hellene  
too ;  
Assyrian and Egyptian proved it true ;  
Who found for youth's young glory and  
its glow  
Serefter life, and calmer tides run slow.

And then oblivion takes, and those  
before,  
Whose very name and race we know  
no more,  
To whom, oh Spirit of the World and  
Man,  
Thou didst reveal Thyself when Time  
began,—

They felt, as I, what none may under-  
stand ;  
They touched through darkness on a  
hidden hand ;

They marked their hopes, their faiths,  
their longings fade,  
And found a solitude themselves had  
made ;

They came, as I, to hope which con-  
quers doubt,  
Though sun and moon and every star  
go out ;  
They ceased, while at their side a still  
voice said,  
“ Fear not, have courage ; blessed are  
the dead.”

They were my brothers—of one blood  
with me,  
As with the unborn myriads who shall  
be :

I am content to rise and fall as they ;  
I watch the dawning of the Perfect Day.

Lead thou me, Spirit, willing and  
content

To be, if thou wouldst have me,  
wholly spent.

I am thine own, I neither strive nor cry :  
Stretch forth thy hand, I grasp it,  
silently.

VENDREDI SAINT.

THIS is Paris, the beautiful city,  
Heaven's gate to the rich, to the poor  
without pity.

The clear sun shines on the fair town's  
graces,

And on the cold green of the shrunken  
river,

And the chill East blows, as it would  
blow for ever,

On the holiday groups with their shin-  
ing faces.

<p>For this is the one solemn day of the season, When all the swift march of her gay unreason Pauses a while, and a thin veil of sadness Half hides, from strange eyes, the old riot and madness, And the churches are crowded with devotees holy, Rich and poor, saint and sinner, the great and the lowly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * * *</p> <p>Here is a roofless palace, where gape Black casements in rows without form or shape : A sordid ruin, whose swift decay Speaks of that terrible morning in May When the whole fair city was blood and fire, And the black smoke of ruin rose higher and higher,</p> <p>And through the still streets, 'neath the broad Spring sun, Everywhere murder and rapine were done ; Women lurking, with torch in hand, Evil eyed, sullen, who soon should stand Before the sharp bayonets, dripping with blood, And be stabbed through and through, or shot dead where they stood.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * * *</p> <p>This is the brand-new Hôtel de Ville, Where six hundred wretches met death in the fire ; Ringed round with a pitiless hedge of steel, Not one might escape that swift ven- geance. To-day</p>	<p>The ruin, the carnage, are clean swept away ; And the sumptuous façades, and the high roofs aspire,</p> <p>And, upon the broad square, the white palace face Looks down with a placid and meaning- less grace, Ignoring the bloodshed, the struggle, the sorrow, The doom that has been, and that may be to-morrow, The hidden hatred, the mad endeavour, The strife that still is and shall be for ever.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * * *</p> <p>Here rise the twin-towers of Notre Dame, Through siege, and revolt, and ruin the same. See the people in crowds pressing onward, slowly, Along the dark aisles to the altar holy— The altar, to-day, wrapt in mourning and gloom, Since He whom they worship lies dead in the tomb.</p> <p>There, by a tiny acolyte tended, A round-checked child in his cassock white, Lies the tortured figure to which are bended The knees of the passers who gaze on the sight, And the people fall prostrate, and kiss and mourn The fair dead limbs which the nails have torn.</p> <p>And the passionate music comes from the quire, Full of soft chords of a yearning pity</p>
--	---

The mournful voices accordant aspire  
To the far-off gates of the Heavenly  
City ;  
And the clear, keen alto, soaring high  
and higher,  
Mounts now a surging fountain, now a  
heavenward fire.

Ay, eighteen centuries after the day,  
A world-worn populace kneel and pray,  
As they pass by and gaze on the limbs  
unbroken.  
What symbol is this ? of what yearnings  
the token ?  
What spell this that leads men a part  
to be  
Of this old Judæan death-agony ?

And I asked, Was it nought but a  
Nature Divine,  
That for lower natures consented to  
die ?  
Could a greater than human sacrifice,  
Still make the tears spring to the world-  
worn eye ?  
One thought only it was that replied,  
and no other :  
This man was our brother.

As I pass from the church, in the cold  
East wind,  
Leaving its solemn teachings behind :  
Once again, on the verge of the chill  
blue river,  
The blighted buds on the branches  
shiver ;  
Here, again, stream the holiday groups,  
with delight  
Gaping in wonder at some new sight.

'Tis an open doorway, squalid and low,  
And crowds which ceaselessly come and  
go,

Careless enough ere they see the sight  
Which leaves the gay faces pallid and  
white :  
Something is there which can change  
their mood,  
And check the holiday flow of the  
blood.

For the face which they see is the face  
of Death.  
Strange, such a thing as the ceasing of  
breath  
Should work such miraculous change as  
here :  
Turn the thing that we love, to a thing  
of fear ;  
Transform the sordid, the low, the  
mean,  
To a phantasm, pointing to Depths  
unseen.

There they lie, the dead, unclaimed  
and unknown,  
Each on his narrow and sloping stone.  
The chill water drips from each to the  
ground ;  
No other movement is there, nor sound.  
With the look which they wore when  
they came to die,  
They gaze from blind eyes on the piti-  
less sky.

No woman to-day, thank Heaven, is  
here ;  
But men, old for the most part, and  
broken quite,  
Who, finding this sad world a place of  
fear,  
Have leapt forth hopelessly into the  
night,  
Bankrupt of faith, without love, un-  
friended,  
Dead-tired of life's comedy ere 'twas  
ended.



But here is one younger, whose ashy  
face

Bears some faint shadow of former  
grace.

What brought him here? was it love's  
sharp fever?

Was she worse than dead that he bore  
to leave her?

Or was his young life, ere its summer  
came,

Burnt by Passion's whirlwinds as by a  
flame.

Was it Drink or Desire, or the die's  
sure shame,

Which led this poor wanderer to deep  
disgrace?

Was it hopeless misfortune, unmixed  
with blame,

That laid him here dead, in this dread-  
ful place?

Ah Heaven, of these nineteen long  
centuries,

Is the sole fruit this thing with the  
sightless eyes!

Yesterday, passion and struggle and  
strife,

Hatred, it may be, and anger-choked  
breath;

Yesterday, fear and the burden of life;  
To-day, the cold ease and the calmness

of death:

And that which strove and sinned and  
yielded there,

To-day in what hidden place of God's  
mysterious air?

Whatever he has been, here now he  
lies,

Facing the stare of un pitying eyes.

I turn from the dank and dishonoured  
face,

To the fair dead Christ by his altar  
place,

And the same thought replies to my  
soul, and no other—

This, too, was our brother.

*"NO MORE, NO MORE."*

"No more, no more," the autumnal  
shadows cry;

"No more, no more," our failing  
hearts reply:

Oh! that our lives were come to that  
calm shore

Where change is done, and fading is  
no more.

But should some mightier hand com-  
pletion send,

And smooth life's stream unrippled to  
its end,

Our sated souls, filled with an aching  
pain,

Would yearn for fleeting days and years  
again.

Thrice blessed be the salutary change  
Which day by day brings thoughts and  
feelings strange!

Our gain is loss, we keep but what we  
give,

And only daily dying may we live.

### *THE NEW CREED.*

YESTERDAY, to a girl I said—

"I take no pity on the unworthy dead,  
The wicked, the unjust, the vile who  
die;

'Twere better thus that they should rot  
and lie.

The sweet, the lovable, the just  
 Make holy dust ;  
 Elsewhere than on the earth  
 Shall come their second birth.  
 Until they go each to his destined  
     place,  
 Whether it be to bliss or to disgrace,  
 'Tis well that both shall rest, and for a  
     while be dead."

"There is nowhere else," she said.

"There is nowhere else." And this  
     was a girl's voice  
 Who, some short tale of summers gone  
     to-day,  
 Would carelessly rejoice,  
 As life's blithe springtide passed upon  
     its way  
 And all youth's infinite hope and bloom  
 Shone round her ; nor might any  
     shadow of gloom  
 Fall on her as she passed from flower  
     to flower ;  
 Love sought her, with full dower  
 Of happy wedlock and young lives to  
     rear ;  
 Nor shed her eyes a tear,  
 Save for some passing pity, fancy-bred.  
 All good things were around her—  
     riches, love,  
 All that the heart and mind can move,  
 The precious things of art, the un-  
     defiled  
 And innocent affection of a child.  
 Oh girl, who always sunny ways dost  
     tread,  
 What curse is this that blights that  
     comely head ?  
 For right or wrong there is no further  
     place than here,  
 No sanctities of hope, no chastening  
     fear ?  
 "There is nowhere else," she said.

"There is nowhere else," and in the  
     wintry ground  
 When we have laid the darlings of our  
     love—

The little lad with eyes of blue,  
 The little maid with curls of gold,  
 Or the beloved aged face  
 On which each passing year stamps a  
     diviner grace—

That is the end of all, the narrow  
     bound.

Why look our eyes above  
 To an unreal home which mortal never  
     knew—

Fold the hands on the breast, the clay-  
     cold fingers fold ?

No waking comes there to the uncaring  
     dead !

"There is nowhere else," she said.

Strange ; is it old or new, this deep  
     distress ?

Or do the generations, as they press  
 Onward for ever, onward still,  
 Finding no truth to fill  
 Their starving yearning souls, from year  
     to year

Feign some new form of fear  
 To fright them, some new terror  
 Couched on the path of error,  
 Some cold and desolate word which,  
     like a blow,

Forbids the current of their faith to flow,  
 Makes slow their pulse's eager beat,  
 And, chilling all their wonted heat,  
 Leaves them to darkling thoughts and  
     dreads a prey,

Uncheered by dawning shaft or setting  
     ray ?

Ah, old it is, indeed, and nowise new.  
 This is the poison-growth that grew

In the old thinkers' fancy-haunted  
ground.

They, blinded by some keen too-vivid  
gleam

Of the Unseen, to which all things did  
seem

To shape themselves and tend,

Solved, by some Giant Force, the  
Mystery of Things,

And, soaring all too high on Fancy's  
wings,

Saw in dead matter both their Source  
and End.

They felt the self-same shock and pain  
As I who hear these prattlings cold to-  
day.

Not otherwise of old the fool to his  
heart did say.

"There is no other place of joy or  
grief,

Nor wrong in doubt, nor merit in belief:  
There is no God, nor Lord of quick  
and dead;

There is nowhere else," they said.

And, indeed, if any to whom life's path  
were rough

Should say as you, he had cause maybe  
at sight.

Truly, the way is steep and hard enough,  
And wrong is tangled and confused  
with right;

And from all the world there goes a  
solemn sound

Of lamentations, rising from the ground,  
Confused as that which shocks the won-  
dering ear

Of one who, gliding on the still lagune,  
Finds the oar's liquid splash and tune  
Lost in wild cries of frenzy and of  
fear,

And knows the Isle of Madness draw-  
ing near;

And the great scheme, if scheme there  
be indeed,

Is a book deeper than our eyes may  
read,

Full of wild paradox, and vain endea-  
vour,

And hopes and faiths which find com-  
pletion never.

For such a one, in seasons of dismay  
And dark depression deepening to  
despair,

Clouds come oftentimes to veil the face  
of day,

And there is no ray left of all the beams  
of gold,

The glow, the radiance bright, the un-  
clouded faith of old.

But you, poor child forlorn,

Ah! better were it you were never born;  
Better that you had flung your heart  
away

On some coarse lump of clay;

Better defeat, disgrace, childlessness,  
all

That can a solitary life befall,

Than to have all things and yet be

Self-bound to dark despondency,

And self-tormented, beyond reach of  
doubt,

By some cold world that puts all yearn-  
ings out.

"There is nowhere else," she said:

This is the outcome of their crude Belief  
Who are, beyond all rescue and relief,  
Being self-slain and numbered with the  
dead.

"There is no God but Force,

Which, working always on its destined  
course,

Speeds on its way and knows no thought  
of change.

Within the germ the molecule fares free,  
Holding the potency of what shall be ;  
Within the little germ lurks the heaven-  
reaching tree :

No break is there in all the cosmic  
show.

What place is there, in all the Scheme  
Immense,

For a remote unworking Excellence  
Which may not be perceived by any  
sense,

Which makes no humble blade of grass  
to grow,

Which adds no single link to things and  
thoughts we know ? "

" For everything that is, indeed,  
Bears with it its own seed ;  
It cannot change or cease and be no  
more :

All things for ever are even as they  
were before,

Or if, by long degrees and slow,  
More complex doth the organism grow,  
It makes no break in the eternal plan ;  
There is no gulf that yawns between  
the herb and man."

Poor child, what is it they have taught,  
Who through deep glooms and desert  
wastes of thought

Have brought to such as you their dreary  
creed ?

Have they no care, indeed,  
For all the glorious gains of man's long  
past,

For all our higher hope of what shall  
be at last ?

" All things are moulded in one mould ;  
They spring, they are, they fade by one  
compulsion cold—

Some dark necessity we cannot know,  
Which bids them wax and grow,—

That is sufficient cause for all things,  
quick and dead ! "

" There is no Cause else," she said.

Oh, poor indeed, and in evil case,  
Who shouldst be far from sound of doubt  
As a maiden in some restful place

Whose tranquil life, year in year out,  
Is built on gentle worship, homely days  
Lit each by its own light of prayer and  
praise,

For whom the spire points always to  
the sky,

And heaven lies open to the cloistered  
eye.

For us, for us, who mid the weary strife  
And jangling discords of our life  
Are day by day opprest,

'Twere little wonder were our souls  
distrest,

God, and the life to be, and all our  
early trust

Being far from us expelled and thrust ;  
But for you, child, who cannot know  
at all

To what mysterious laws we stand or  
fall,

To what bad heights the wrong within  
may grow,

To what dark deeps the stream of hope-  
less lives may flow !

For let the doubter cavil as he can,  
There is no wit in man

Which can make Force rise higher  
still

Up to the heights of Will,—  
No phase of Force which finite minds  
can know

Can self-determined grow,  
And of itself elect what shall its essence  
be :

The same to all eternity,

Unchanged, unshaped, it goes upon its  
     blinded way ;  
 Nor can all forces nor all laws  
 Bring ceasing to the scheme, nor any  
     pause,  
 Nor shape it to the mould in which to be—  
 Form from the winged seed the myriad-  
     branching tree,—  
 Nor guide the force once sped, so that  
     it turn  
 To Water-floods that quench or Fires  
     that burn,  
 Or now to the electric current change,  
 Or draw all things by some attraction  
     strange.  
 Or in the brain of man, working unseen,  
     sublime,  
 Transcend the narrow bounds of Space  
     and Time.

Whence comes the innate Power which  
     knows to guide  
 The force deflected so from side to side,  
 That not a barren line from whence to  
     where

It goes upon its way through the un-  
     fettered air ?

What launched the prisoned atom on  
     its fruitful course ?

Ah, it was more than Force  
 Which gave the Universe of things its  
     form and face !

Force moving on its path through Time  
     and Space

Would round no orb, but leave all  
     barren still.

A higher Power, it was, the worlds  
     could form and fill ;

And by some pre-existent harmony  
 Were all things made as Fate would  
     have them be—

Fate, the ineffable Word of an Eternal  
     Will.

All things that are or seem,  
 Whether we wake who see or do but  
     dream,

Are of that Primal Will phantasms, if  
     no more ;

Who sees these right sees God, and  
     seeing doth adore.

Joy, suffering, evil, good,

Whate'er our daily food,

Whate'er the mystery and paradox of  
     things,

Low creeping thoughts and high ima-  
     ginings.

The laughers of the world, the age-  
     long groan,

Bring to his mind one name, one thought  
     alone ;

All beauty, right, deformity, or wrong,  
 Sing to his ear one high unchanging song ;

And everything that is, to his rapt  
     fancy brings

The hidden beat through space of the  
     Eternal Wings.

Where did the Idea dwell,

At first, which was of all the germ and  
     seed ?

Which worked from Discord order,  
     from blind Force

Sped all the Cosmos on its upward  
     course ?

Which held within the atom and the cell  
 The whole vast hidden Universe, shel-  
     tered well,

Till the hour came to unfold it, and the  
     need ?

What did the ever-upward growth con-  
     ceive,

Which from the obedient monad formed  
     the herb, the tree,

The animal, the man, the high growths  
     that shall be ?

Ever from simpler to more complex  
grown,  
The long processions from a source un-  
known  
Unfold themselves across the scene of  
life.  
Oh blessed struggle and strife,  
Fare onward to the end, since from a  
Source  
Thou art, which doth transcend and  
doth determine Force !  
Fare onward to the end ; not from  
Force, dead and blind  
Thou comest, but from the depths of  
the Creative Mind.

Fare on to the end, but how should  
ending be,  
If Will be in the Universe, and plan ?  
Some higher thing shall be, that which  
to-day is Man.  
Undying is each cosmic force :  
Undying, but transformed, it runs its  
endless course.  
It cannot wane, or sink, or be no  
more.  
Not even the dust and lime which  
clothe us round  
Lose their own substance in the charnel-  
ground,  
Or carried far upon the weltering wind ;  
Only with other growths combined,  
In some new whole they are for ever—  
They are, and perish never.  
The great suns shed themselves in heat  
and light  
On the vast vacant interstellar air,  
Till when their scattered elements unite  
They are replenished as before they  
were.  
Nothing is lost, nor can be : change  
alone,  
Unceasing, never done,

Shapes all the forms of things, and  
keeps them still  
Obedient to the Unknown Perfect  
Will.  
And shall the life that is the highest  
that we know,  
Shall this, alone, no more increase, ex-  
pand and grow ?

Nay, somewhere else there is, although  
we know not where,  
Nor what new shape God gives our  
lives to wear.  
We are content, whatever it shall be ;  
Content, through all eternity,  
To be whatever the Spirit of the World  
deem best ;—  
Content to be at rest ;  
Content to work and fare through end-  
less days ;  
Content to spend ourselves in endless  
praise :  
Nay, if it be the Will Divine,  
Content to be, and through long lives  
to pine,  
Far from the light which vivifies, the  
fire  
Which breathes upon our being and  
doth inspire  
All soaring thoughts and hopes which  
light our pathway here ;  
Content, though with some natural  
thrill of fear,  
To be purged through by age-long  
pain,  
Till we resume our upward march  
again ;  
Content, at need, to take some lower  
form,  
Some humbler herb or worm  
To be awhile, if e'er the eternal plan  
Go back from higher to lower, from  
man to less than man.

Not so, indeed, we hold, but rather  
 this—  
 That all Time gone, that all that was  
 or is,  
 The scarpèd cliff, the illimitable Past,  
 This truth alone of all truths else hold  
 fast :—  
 From lower to higher, from simple to  
 complete,  
 This is the pathway of the Eternal Feet ;  
 From earth to lichen, herb to flowering  
 tree,  
 From cell to creeping worm, from man  
 to what shall be.  
 This is the solemn lesson of all time,  
 This is the teaching of the voice  
 sublime :  
 Eternal are the worlds, and all that  
 them do fill ;  
 Eternal is the march of the Creative  
 Will ;  
 Eternal is the life of man, and sun, and  
 star ;  
 Ay, even though they fade a while,  
 they are ;  
 And though they pause from shining,  
 speed for ever still.

## A GREAT GULF.

If any tender sire  
 Who sits girt round by loving faces  
 And happy childhood's thousand  
 graces,  
 Through sudden crash or fire  
 Should 'scape from this poor life to  
 some mysterious air,  
 And, dwelling solitary there,  
 Feel his unfilled and yearning father's  
 heart  
 Pierced through by some intolerable  
 smart ;

And, sickening for the dear lost lives  
 again,  
 Through his o'ermastering pain  
 Should break the awful bounds the  
 Eternal sets between  
 That which lives Here, and There, the  
 Seen and the Unseen ;

And having gained once more  
 This little Earth, should reach the  
 scarce-left place  
 Which greets him with unchanged  
 familiar face—

The well-remembered door,  
 The rose he watered blooming yet,  
 Nought to remember or forget,  
 No change in all the world except in  
 him,

Nor there save in some sense already dim  
 Before the unaltered past, so that he  
 seem

A mortal spirit still, and what was  
 since, a dream ;

And in the well-known room  
 Finds all the blithe remembered faces  
 Grown sad and blurred by recent traces  
 Of a new sorrow and gloom,  
 And when his soul to comfort them is  
 fain

Mourns his voice mute, his form  
 unknown, unseen,

And thinks with irrepressible pain  
 Of all the happy days which late have  
 been,

And feels his new life's inmost chambers  
 stirred

If only of his own, he might be seen or  
 heard ;

Then if, at length,  
 The father's yearning and o'erburdened  
 soul

Burst into shape and voice which scorn  
control

Of its despairing strength,—

Ah Heaven ! ah pity for the present  
dread

Which rising, strikes the old affection  
dead !

Ah, better were it far than this thing  
to remain,

Voiceless, unseen, unloved, for ever  
and in pain !

So when a finer mind,

Knowing its old self swept by some  
weird change

And the old thought deceased, or else  
grown strange,

Turns to those left behind,

With passionate stress and mighty  
yearning stirred,—

It strives to stand revealed in shape  
and word

In vain ; or by strong travail visible  
grown,

Finds but a world estranged, and lives  
and dies alone !

### ONE DAY.

ONE day, one day, our lives shall seem  
Thin as a brief forgotten dream :

One day, our souls by life opprest,  
Shall ask no other boon than rest.

And shall no hope nor longing come,  
No memory of our former home,  
No yearning for the loved, the dear  
Dead lives that are no longer here ?

If this be age, and age no more  
Recall the hopes, the fears of yore,  
The dear dead mother's accents mild,  
The lisping of the little child,

Come, Death, and slay us ere the  
blood

Run slow, and turn our lives from good ;

For only in such memories we

Consent to linger and to be.

### SEASONS.

THE colds winds rave on the icy  
river,

The leafless branches complain and  
shiver,

The snow clouds sweep on, to a dreary  
tune,—

Can these be the earth and the heavens  
of June ?—

When the blossoming trees gleam in  
virginal white,

And heaven's gate opens wide in the  
lucid night,

And there comes no sound on the  
perfumed air

But the passionate brown bird, carolling  
fair,

And the lush grass in upland and low-  
land stands deep,

And the loud landrail lulls the children  
to sleep,

And the white still road and the thick  
leaved wood

Are haunted by fanciful solitude ;

And by garden and lane men and  
maidens walk,

Busied with trivial, loverlike talk ;

And the white and the red rose, newly  
blown,

Open, each with a perfume and grace  
of its own.



The cold wind sweeps o'er the desolate  
hill,  
The stream is bound fast and the wolds  
are chill ;  
And by the dead flats, where the cold  
blasts moan,  
A bent body wearily plods alone.

### THE PATHOS OF ART.

OfT, seeing the old painters' art,  
We find the tear unbidden start,  
And feel our full hearts closer grow  
To the far days of long ago.

Not burning faith, or godlike pain,  
Can thus our careless thought enchain ;  
The heavenward gaze of souls sublime,  
At once transcends, and conquers time.

Nor pictured form of seer or saint,  
Which hands inspired delight to paint ;  
Art's highest aims of hand or tongue,  
Age not, but are for ever young.

But some imperfect trivial scene,  
Of homely life which once has been,  
Of youth, so soon to pass away,  
Of happy childhood's briefer day :

Or humble daily tasks portrayed—  
The thrifty mistress with her maid ;  
The flowers, upon the casement set,  
Which in our Aprils blossom yet ;

The long processions, never done ;  
The time-worn palace, scarce begun ;  
The gondolier, who plies his oar  
For stately sirs or dames of yore ;

The girl with fair hair morning-stirred,  
Who swings the casement for her bird ;

The hunt ; the feast ; the simple mirth  
Which marks the marriage or the  
birth ;

The burly forms, from side to side  
Swift rolling on the frozen tide ;  
The long-haired knights ; the ladies  
prim ;  
The chanted madrigal or hymn ;

The opera, with its stately throng ;  
The twilight church aisles stretching  
long ;  
The spires upon the wooded wold ;  
The dead pathetic life of old ;—

These all the musing mind can fill—  
So dead, so past, yet living still :  
Oh dear dead lives, oh hands long gone,  
Whose life, whose Art still lingers on !

### IN THE STRAND.

In the midst of the busy and roaring  
Strand,  
Dividing life's current on either hand,  
A time-worn city church, sombre and  
grey,  
Waits, while the multitude passes away.

Beside it, a strait plot of churchyard  
ground  
Is fenced by a time-worn railing  
around ;  
And within, like a pavement, the  
ground is spread  
With the smooth worn stones of the  
nameless dead.

But here and there, in the spaces  
between,  
When the slow Spring bursts, and the  
fields grow green,

Every year that comes, 'mid the graves  
of the dead

Some large-leaved flower-stem lifts up  
its head.

In the Spring, though as yet the sharp  
East be here,

This green stem burgeons forth year by  
year :

Through twenty swift summers and  
more, have I seen

This tender shoot rise from its sheath  
of green.

New busy crowds pass on with hurry-  
ing feet,

The young lives grow old and the old  
pass away ;

But unchanged, 'mid the graves, at the  
fated day,

The green sheath bursts upwards and  
grows complete.

From the grave it bursts forth, 'mid the  
graves it shall die,

It shall die as we die, as it lives we  
shall live ;

And this poor flower has stronger  
assurance to give,

Than volumes of learning, which  
blunder or lie.

For out of the dust and decay of the  
tomb,

It springs, the sun calling, to beauty  
and bloom ;

And amid the sad city, 'mid death and  
'mid strife,

It preaches its mystical promise of life.

*COELUM NON ANIMUM.*

Oh fair to be, oh sweet to be  
In fancy's shallop faring free,  
With silken sail and fairy mast  
To float till all the world be past !

Oh happy fortune, on and on  
To wander far till care be gone,  
Round beetling capes, to unknown  
seas,  
Seeking the fair Hesperides !

But is there any land or sea  
Where toil and trouble cease to be--  
Some dim, unfound, diviner shore,  
Where men may sin and mourn no  
more ?

Ah, not the feeling, but the sky  
We change, however far we fly ;  
How swift soe'er our bark may speed,  
Faster the blessed isles recede.

Nay, best it is at home to find  
Food for the labouring heart and mind,  
And take, since thus the world grows  
fair,  
Duty and pleasure everywhere.

Oh well-worn road, oh homely way,  
Where pace our footsteps, day by day,  
The homestead and the church which  
bound  
The tranquil seasons' circling round !

Ye hold experiences which reach  
Depths which no change of skies can  
teach,  
The saintly thought, the secret strife  
Which guide, which do perturb our  
life.

## NIOBE.

ON SIPYLUS.

All me, ah me! on this high mountain  
 peak,  
 Which far above the seething Lydian  
 plains  
 Takes the first dawn-shaft, and the sun-  
 set keeps  
 When all the fields grow dark—I,  
 Niobe,  
 A mother's heart, pent in a prison of  
 stone,  
 Stand all day in the vengeful sun-god's  
 eye,  
 Stand all night in the cold gaze of the  
 moon,  
 Who both long ages since conspiring,  
 slew  
 My children,—I a childless mother  
 now  
 Who was most blest, a grieving woman  
 still,  
 Who am bereft of all, yet cannot die.

Ah day, ill-fated day, which wrecked  
 my life!  
 I was the happy mother of strong sons,  
 Brave, beautiful, all in their bloom of  
 age:  
 From him my first-born, now a bearded  
 man,  
 Through the fair promise of imperfect  
 youth,  
 To the slim stripling who had scarcely  
 left  
 The women's chambers, on whose lip  
 scant shade  
 Of budding manhood showed, I loved  
 them all;  
 All with their father's eyes, and that  
 strange charm

Of rhythmic grace, and musical utter-  
 ance  
 As when, in far-off Thebes, the en-  
 charmed wall  
 Rose perfect, to the music of his lyre.

Ah me, the fatal day! For at high noon  
 I sate within my Theban palace fair—  
 Deep summer-time it was—and marked  
 the crowd  
 From the thronged city street, to the  
 smooth plain,  
 Stream joyously: the brave youths, full  
 of life,  
 Stripped for the mimic fray, the leap,  
 the race,  
 The wrestling; and the princes, my  
 strong sons,  
 The fair limbs I had borne beneath my  
 zone  
 Grown to full stature, such as maidens  
 love,—  
 The sinewy arms, the broad chests, and  
 strong loins  
 Of manhood; the imperfect flower-like  
 forms,  
 Eager with youth's first fires; my  
 youngest born,  
 My darling, doffing his ephêbic robe  
 Which late he donned with pride, a  
 child in heart,  
 In budding limbs a youth;—I see them  
 go,  
 Their fair young bodies glistening in  
 the sun,  
 Which kissed the shining olive. As  
 they went,  
 The joyous concourse winding towards  
 the plain,  
 My happy eyes o'erflowed, and as I  
 turned  
 And saw my daughters round me, fair  
 grown lives

And virgin, sitting spinning the white  
 flax,  
 Each with her distaff, beautiful and  
 fit  
 To wed with any stately king of men  
 And reign a queen in Hellas, my glad  
 heart  
 Broke forth in pride, and as I looked I  
 thought,  
 "Oh happy, happy mother of such  
 sons !  
 Oh happy, happy mother of such girls !  
 For whom full soon the joyous nuptial  
 rites  
 Shall bring the expectant bridegroom  
 and the bride,  
 And soon once more the little childish  
 hands  
 Which shall renew my early wedded  
 years,  
 When the king loved me first. Thrice  
 blest indeed.  
 There is no queen in Hellas such as I,  
 Dowered with such fair-grown off-  
 spring ; not a queen  
 Nor mother o'er all earth's plain, around  
 which flows  
 The wide salt stream of the encircling  
 sea,  
 As blest as I. Nay, in Olympus' self  
 To all-compelling Zeus, what offspring  
 bare  
 Leto of yore ? Phœbus and Artemis,  
 A goodly pair indeed, but two alone.  
 Poor mother, that to such a lord as  
 Zeus  
 Bare only those, no fairer than my own.  
 Nay, I am happier than a goddess'  
 self ;  
 I would not give this goodly train of  
 mine  
 For that scant birth. I ask no boon of  
 Zeus,

Nor of the Olympian Gods ; for I am  
 glad.  
 No fruitful mother in a peasant's hut,  
 Scorning the childless great, thinks  
 scorn of me,  
 Being such as I. Nay, let Queen Leto's  
 self  
 Know, that a mortal queen has chanced  
 to bear  
 As fair as she, and more."  
 Even as I spoke,  
 While these unhallowed boastings  
 flushed my pride,  
 Through the closed lattice pierced one  
 angry shaft  
 Of blinding sun, which on the opposite  
 wall  
 Traced some mysterious sign, and on  
 my mind  
 Such vague remorse and consciousness  
 of ill,  
 That straight, that arrogant boldness  
 sank and died  
 In a great dread, nor hardly could I bear  
 To look upon the fairness of my girls,  
 Who, seeing the vague trouble in my  
 eyes,  
 Grew pale, and shuddered for no cause,  
 and gazed  
 Chilled 'midst the blaze of sunlight.  
 Then I strove  
 To laugh my fears away, as one who  
 knows  
 Some great transgression weigh on him,  
 some load  
 Which will not be removed, but bears  
 him down,  
 Though none else knows it, pressing  
 on his heart.  
 But when the half unuttered thought  
 grew dim  
 And my fear with it, suddenly a cry

Rose from the city street, and then the sound	Frenzied my brain, and all distraught with woe
(Of measured hurrying feet, and looking forth	I to the palace tottered, while they bore
To where the youth had passed so late, in joy,	Slowly the comely corpses of my sons.
Came two who carried tenderly, with tears,	That day I dare not think of when they lay,
A boy's slight form. I had no need to look,	White shrouded, in the darkened palace rooms,
For all the mother rising in me knew	Like sculptured statues on a marble hearse.
That 'twas my youngest born they bore : I knew	How calm they looked and happy, my dear sons !
What fate befell him—'twas the venge- ful sun,	There was no look of pain within their eyes,
And I alone was guilty, I, his mother, Who being filled with impious pride, had brought	The dear dead eyes which I their mother closed ;
Death to my innocent child. I hurried down	Me miserable ! I saw the priests ap- proach,
The marble stair and met them as they came,	And ministers of death ; I saw my girls Flung weeping on the brothers whom they loved.
Bearing his corpse, and kissed his lips and called	I saw it all as in a dream. I know not How often the dead night woke into day,
His name, yet knew that he was dead ; and all	How often the hot day-time turned to night.
His brothers stood regarding us with tears,	I did not shudder even to see the Sun Which slew my sons ; but in the still, dead night,
And would have soothed me with their loving words,	When in that chill and lifeless place of death,
Me guilty, who were guiltless, oh, my sons !	The cold, clear, cruel moonlight seemed to play
Till as I looked up from the dead,—a cry	Upon the ranged corpses, and to mock My mother's heart, and throw on each a hue
Of agony,—and then another fell Struggling for life upon the earth, and then	Of swift corruption ere its time, I knew Some secret terror lest the jealous gods Might find some further dreadful ven- geance still,
Another, and another, till the last Of all my stalwart boys, my life, my pride,	Taking what yet was left.
Lay dead upon the ground, and the fierce sun	

At set of sun  
The sad procession to the place of  
    graves  
Went with the rites of royal sepulture,  
The high priest at its head, the nobles  
    round  
The dear white<sup>\*</sup> shrouded corpses: Last  
    of all  
I went, the guilty one, my fair sweet  
    girls  
Clinging to me in tears ; but I, I shed  
    not  
A single tear—grief dried the fount of  
    tears,  
I had shed all mine.

    Only o'ermastering dread  
Held me of what might come.

    When they were laid,  
Oh, wretched me, my dear, my well-  
    loved sons !

Within the kingly tomb, the dying sun  
Had set, and in his stead the rising  
    moon,

Behind some lofty mountain-peak con-  
    cealed,

Relit some ghostly twilight. As we  
    knelt,

The people all withdrawn a little space,  
I and my daughters in that place of  
    death,

I lifted up my suppliant voice, and they  
With sweet girl voices pure, and soaring  
    hymn,

To the great Powers above.

    But when at last  
I heard my hollow voice pleading alone  
And all the others silent, then I looked,  
And on the tomb the cold malignant  
    moon,

Bursting with pale chill beams of light,  
    revealed

My fair girls kneeling mute and motion-  
    less,

Their dead eyes turned to the unpitying  
    orb,

Their white lips which should offer  
    prayer no more.

Such vengeance wreaked Phœbus and  
    Artemis

Upon a too proud mother. But on me  
Who only sinned no other punishment  
They took, only the innocent lives I  
    loved--

If any punishment, indeed, were more  
Than this to one who had welcomed  
    death. I think

My children happier far in death than I  
Who live to muse on these things.

    When my girls  
Were laid in earth, I, my lone palace  
    gate

Leaving without a tear, sped hither in  
    haste

To this high rock of Sipylus where erst  
My father held his court ; and here,  
    long years,

Summer and winter, stay I, day and  
    night

Gazing towards the far-off plain of  
    Thebes,

Whercin I was so happy of old time,  
Whercin I erred and suffered. Turned-  
    to stone

They thought me, and 'tis true the  
    mother's heart

Which knows such grief as I knew,  
    turns to stone,

And all her life ; and pitying Zeus, in-  
    deed,

Seeing my suffering, listened to my  
    prayer

And left me seeming stone, but still the  
    heart

Of the mother grows not hard, and year  
    by year

When comes the summer with its cloud-  
less skies,  
And the high sun lights hill and plain  
by day,  
And the moon, shining, silvers them  
by night,  
My old grief, rising dew-like to my  
eyes,  
Quickens my life with not unhappy  
tears,  
And through my penitent and yearning  
heart  
There throbs again a pulse of love and  
grief :  
Love triumphing at last o'er Fate and  
Death,  
Grief all divine and vindicating Love.

## PICTURES—II.

A LURID sunset, red as blood,  
Firing a sombre, haunted wood ;  
From whose recesses, dark and fell,  
One hurries with a face of Hell.

Two at a banquet board alone,  
In dalliance, the feast being done.  
And one behind the arras stands,  
Grasping an axe with quivering hands.

A high cliff-meadow lush with Spring ;  
Gay butterflies upon the wing ;  
Beneath, beyond, unbounded, free,  
The foam-flecked, blue, pervading sea.

A clustering hill-town, climbing white  
From the grey olives up the height,

And higher on the glaring sky  
A huge sierra, dead and dry.

A rain-swept moor at shut of day,  
And by the dead unhappy way  
A lonely child untended lies :  
Against the West a wretch who flies.

Cold dawn, which flouts the abandoned  
hall,  
And one worn face, which loathes it all ;  
In his ringed hand a vial, while  
The grey lips wear a ghastly smile.

Corinthian pillars fine, which stand  
In moonlight on a desert sand ;  
Others o'erthrown, in whose dark shade  
Some fire-eyed brute its lair has made.

Mountainous clouds embattled high  
Around a dark blue lake of sky ;  
And from its clear depths, shining far,  
The calm eye of the evening star.

A moonlight chequered avenue ;  
Above, a starlit glimpse of blue :  
And from the thick-laced shade be-  
tween  
The grey ghost of a woman seen.

## A NIGHT IN NAPLES.

THIS is the one night in all the year  
When the faithful of Naples who love  
their priest

May find their faith and their wealth  
increased ;  
For just as the stroke of midnight is  
here,

Those who with faithful undoubting  
mind  
Their "Aves" mutter, their rosaries  
tell,  
They without doubt shall a recompence  
find ;  
Yea, their faith indeed shall profit them  
well.

Therefore, to-night, in the hot thronged  
street

By San Gennaro's, the people devout,  
With banner, and relic, and thurible  
meet,

With some sacred image to marshal  
them out.

For a few days hence, the great lottery  
Of the sinful city declared will be,  
And it may be that Aves and Paters  
said  
Will bring some aid from the realms of  
the dead.

And so to the terrible place of the tomb  
They issue, a pitiful crowd, through the  
gloom,  
To where all the dead of the city decay,  
Waiting the trump of the judgment day.

For every day of the circling year  
Brings its own sum of corruption here ;  
Every day has its great pit, fed  
With its dreadful heap of the shroudless  
dead.

And behind a grated rust-eaten door,  
Marked each with their fated month  
and day,

The young and the old, who in life  
were poor,  
Fester together and rot away.

Silence is there, the silence of death,  
And in silence those poor pilgrims  
wearily pace,  
And the wretched throng, pitiful, hold-  
ing its breath,  
Comes with shambling steps to the  
dreadful place.

Till before these dark portals, the  
muttering crowd  
Breaks at length into passionate suff-  
rages loud,  
Waiting the flickering vapour thin,  
Bred of the dreadful corruption within.

And here is a mother who kneels, not  
in woe,  
By the vault where her child was flung  
months ago ;  
And there is a strong man who peers  
with dry eyes  
At the mouth of the gulph where his  
dead wife lies.

Till at last, to reward them, a faint blue  
fire,  
Like the ghost of a soul, flickers here or  
there  
At the gate of a vault, on the noisome  
air,  
And the wretched throng has its low  
desire ;

And with many a praise of favouring  
saint,  
And curses if any refuses to heed,  
Full of low hopes and of sordid greed,  
To the town they file backward, weary  
and faint.



And a few days hence, the great lottery  
Of the sinful city declared will be,  
And a number thus shewn to those  
sordid eyes,  
May, the saints being willing, attain  
the prize.

Wherefore to Saint and Madonna be  
said,  
All praise and laud, and the faithful  
dead !

\* \* \* \*

It was long, long ago, in far-off Judæa,  
That they slew Him of old, whom  
these slay to-day ;  
They slew Him of old, in far-off  
Judæa,—  
It is long, long ago ; it was far, far away !

### LIFE.

LIKE to a star, or to a fire,  
Which ever brighter grown, or higher,  
Doth shine forth fixed, or doth aspire ;

Or to a glance, or to a sigh ;  
Or to a low wind whispering by,  
Which scarce has risen ere it die ;

Or to a bird, whose rapid flight  
Eludes the dazed observer's sight,  
Or a stray shaft of glancing light,

That for an instant breaks the gloom  
Which wraps some dark, forgotten  
tomb,  
Or some sweet Spring-flower's fleeting  
bloom ;—

Mixed part of reason, part belief,  
Of pain and pleasure, joy and grief,  
As changeful as the Spring, and  
brief ;—

A wave, a shadow, a breath, a strife,  
With change on change for ever rife !—  
This is the thing we know as life.

### CRADLED IN MUSIC.

A BRIGHT young mother, day by day,  
I meet upon the crowded way,  
Who turns her dark eyes, deep and  
mild,  
Upon her little sleeping child.

For on the organ laid asleep,  
In childish slumbers light, yet deep,  
Calmly the rosy infant lies ;  
The long fair lashes veil its eyes.

There, o'er its childish slumbers sweet,  
The winged hours steal with noiseless  
feet ;

Far off the music seems to cheer  
The child's accustomed drowsy ear.

Hymn tune and song tune, grave and  
gay,  
Comfort him all the joyous day ;  
And, half remembered, faintly seem  
To mingle with his happy dream.

Poor child, for whom the summer long  
Our dull days slip by, winged with  
song ;

Sleeping for half the tuneful day,  
Waking 'neath loving looks to play ;

Whose innocent eyes unconscious see  
Nothing but mirth in misery.  
Thy mother smiles, thy sister stands  
Smiling, the tambour in her hands.

And with the time of hard-earned rest,  
'Tis thine to press that kindly breast ;

Nor dream of all the toil, the pain,  
The weary round begun again,—

The fruitless work, the blow, the curse,  
The hunger, the contempt, or worse ;  
The laws despite, the vague alarms,  
Which pass not those protecting arms.

Only, as yet, 'tis thine to know  
The bright young faces all aglow,  
As down the child-encumbered street  
The music stirs the lightsome feet,

Only to crow and smile, as yet.  
Soon shall come clouds, and cold, and  
    wet ;  
And where the green leaves whisper  
    now,  
The mad East flinging sleet and snow.

And if to childhood thou shalt come—  
Childhood that knows not hearth or  
    home,—  
Coarse words maybe, and looks of  
    guile,  
Shall chase away that constant smile.

Were it not better, child, than this,  
The burden of full life to miss ;  
And now, while yet the time is May,  
Amid the music pass away.

And leave the dissonant cries of wrong  
For the immortal, perfect song ;  
And take the changeless heavenly life  
For earth's poor vagrant toil and strife ;

And keep, within those opened skies,  
A vision of thy mother's eyes ;  
And hear those old strains, faint and  
    dim,  
Grown fine, within the eternal hymn ?

Nay, whatsoe'er our thought may deem,  
Not that is better which may seem ;  
'Twere better that thou camest to be,  
If Fate so willed, in misery.

What shall be, shall be—that is all ;  
To one great Will we stand and fall.  
"The Scheme hath need"—we ask not  
    why,  
And in this faith we live and die.

ODATIS.

AN OLD LOVE-TALE.

CHARES of Mytilenè, ages gone,  
When the young Alexander's conquer-  
    ing star  
Flamed on the wondering world, being  
    indeed  
The comrade of his arms, from the far  
    East  
Brought back this story of requited  
    love.

— — —  
A Prince there was of Media, next of  
    blood  
To the great King Hystaspes, fair of  
    form  
As brave of soul, who to his flower  
    of age  
Was come, but never yet had known  
    the dart  
Of Cypris, being but a soldier bold,  
Too much by trenched camps and wars'  
    alarms  
Engrossed, to leave a thought for things  
    of love.

Now, at this selfsame time, by Tanais  
Omarthes ruled, a just and puissant  
    king.

No son was his, only one daughter fair,  
 Odatis, of whose beauty and whose  
     worth  
 Fame filled the furthest East. Only as  
     yet,  
 Of all the suitors for her hand, came  
     none  
 Who touched her maiden heart ; but,  
     fancy free,  
 She dwelt unwedded, lonely as a star.  
  
 Till one fair night in springtide, when  
     the heart  
 Blossoms as does the earth, Cypris, the  
     Queen,  
 Seeing that love is sweet for all to taste,  
 And pitying these loveless parted lives,  
 Deep in the sacred silence of the night,  
 From out the ivory gate sent down on  
     them  
 A happy dream, so that the Prince had  
     sight  
 Of fair Odatis in her diadem  
 And habit as she lived, and saw the  
     charm  
 And treasure of her eyes, and knew  
     her name  
 And country as it was ; while to the  
     maid  
 There came a like fair vision of the  
     Prince  
 Leading to fight the embattled Median  
     hosts,  
 Young, comely, brave, clad in his  
     panoply  
 And pride of war, so strong, so fair, so  
     true,  
 That straight, the virgin coldness of  
     her soul  
 Melted beneath the vision, as the snow  
 In springtime at the kisses of the

And when they twain awoke to com-  
     mon day  
 From that blest dream, still on their  
     tranced eyes  
 The selfsame vision lingered. He a form  
 Lovelier than all his life had known,  
     more pure  
 And precious than all words ; she a  
     strong soul  
 Yet tender, comely with the fire, the  
     force  
 Of youthful manhood ; saw both night  
     and day.

Nor ever from their mutual hearts the  
     form  
 Of that celestial vision waned nor grew  
 Faint with the daily stress of common  
     life,  
 As do our mortal phantasies, but still  
 He, while the fiery legions clashed and  
     broke,  
 Saw one sweet face above the flash of  
     spears ;  
 She in high palace pomps, or house-  
     hold tasks,  
 Or 'mid the glittering courtier-crowded  
     halls  
 Saw one brave ardent gaze, one manly  
     form.

Now while in dreams of love these  
     lovers lived  
 Who never met in waking hours, who  
     knew not  
 Whether with unrequited love they  
     burned, or whether  
 In mutual yearnings blest ; the King  
     Omaras,  
 Crown anxious for his only girl, and  
     knowing  
 How blest it is to love, would bid her  
     choose

Whom she would wed, and summoning  
the maid,

With fatherly counsels pressed on her ;  
but she :

"Father, I am but young ; I prithee,  
ask not

That I should wed ; nay, rather let me  
live

My life within thy house. I cannot  
wed.

I can love only one, who is the Prince  
Of Media, but I know not if indeed  
His love is his to give, or if he know  
My love for him ; only a heavenly  
vision,

Sent in the sacred silence of the night,  
Revealed him to me as I know he is.

\*Wherefore, my father, though thy will  
be law,

Have pity on me ; let me love my love,  
If not with recompense of love, alone ;  
For I can love none else."

Then the King said :

"Daughter, to me thy happiness is  
life,

And more ; but now, I pray thee, let  
my words

Sink deep within thy mind. Thou  
canst not know

If this strange vision through the gate  
of truth

Came or the gate of error. Oftentimes  
The gods send strong delusions to  
ensnare

Too credulous hearts. Thou canst not  
know, in sooth,

If 'twas the Prince thou saw'st, or,  
were it he,

If love be his to give ; and if it were,  
I could not bear to lose thee, for indeed  
I have no son to take my place, or pour  
Libations on my tomb, and shouldst  
thou wed

A stranger, and be exiled from thy  
home, .

What were my life to me ? Nay,  
daughter, dream

No more, but with some chieftain of  
my realm

Prepare thyself to wed. With the new  
moon

A solemn banquet will I make, and bid  
Whate'er of high descent and generous  
youth

Our country holds. There shalt thou  
make thy choice

Of whom thou wilt, nor will I seek to  
bind

Thy unfettered will ; only I fain would  
see thee

In happy wedlock bound, and feel the  
touch

Of childish hands again, and soothe my  
age

With sight of thy fair offspring round  
my knees."

Then she, because she loved her sire  
and fain

Would do his will, left him without a  
word,

Obedient to his hest ; but day and  
night

The one unfading image of her dream  
Filled all her longing sight, and day  
and night

The semblance of her Prince in all the  
pride

And bravery of battle shone on her.

Nor was there any strength in her to  
heal

The wound which love had made, by  
reasonings cold,

Or musing on the phantasies of sleep ;  
But still the fierce dart of the goddess  
burned

Within her soul, as when a stricken  
     deer  
 O'er hill and dale escaping bears with  
     her  
 The barb within her side ; and oft alone  
 Within her secret chamber she would  
     name  
 The name of him she loved, and oft by  
     night,  
 When sleep had bound her fast, her  
     pale lips formed  
 The syllables of his name. Through  
     the long hours,  
 Waking or sleeping, were her thoughts  
     on him ;  
 So that the quenchless yearning long  
     deferred  
 Made her heart sick, and like her heart,  
     her form  
 Wasted, her fair cheek paled, and from  
     her eyes  
 Looked out the silent suffering of her  
     soul.

Now, when the day drew near which  
     brought the feast,  
 One of her slaves, who loved her,  
     chanced to hear  
 Her sweet voice wandering in dreams,  
     and caught  
 The Prince's name ; and, being full of  
     grief  
 And pity for her pain, and fain to aid  
 The gentle girl she loved, made haste  
     to send  
 A messenger to seek the Prince and tell  
     him  
 How he was loved, and when the feast  
     should be,  
 And how the King would have his  
     daughter wed.  
 But to the Princess would she breathe  
     no word

Of what was done, till, almost on the  
     eve  
 Of the great feast, seeing her wan and  
     pale  
 And all unhappy, falling at her knees,  
 She, with a prayer for pardon, told her  
     all.

But when the Princess heard her, virgin  
     shame—  
 Love drawing her and Pride of Maiden-  
     hood  
 In opposite ways till all distraught was  
     she—  
 Flushed her pale cheek, and lit her lan-  
     guid gaze.  
 Yet since she knew that loving thought  
     alone  
 Prompted the deed, being soft and  
     pitiful,  
 She bade her have no fear, and though  
     at first  
 Unwilling, by degrees a newborn hope  
 Chased all her shame away, and once  
     again  
 A long unwonted rose upon her cheek  
 Bloomed, and a light long vanished  
     fired her eyes.

Meanwhile upon the plains in glorious  
     war  
 The brave Prince led his conquering  
     hosts ; but still,  
 Amid the shock of battle and the crash  
 Of hostile spears, one vision filled his  
     soul.  
 Amid the changes of the hard-fought  
     day,  
 Throughout the weary watches of the  
     night,  
 The dream, the happy dream, returned  
     again ;  
 Always the selfsame vision of a maid

Fairer than earthly, filled his eyes and  
took  
The savour from the triumph, ay, and  
touched  
The warrior's heart with an unwonted  
ruth,  
So that he shrank as never yet before  
From every day's monotony of blood,  
And saw with unaccustomed pain the  
sum  
Of death and woe, and hopeless shat-  
tered lives,  
Because a softer influence touched his  
soul.

Till one night, on the day before the feast  
Which King Omartes destined for his  
peers,  
While now his legions swept their con-  
quering way  
A hundred leagues or more from Tanais,  
There came the message from the slave,  
and he  
Within his tent, after the well-fought  
day,  
Resting with that fair image in his eyes,  
Woke suddenly to know that he was  
loved.

Then, in a moment, putting from him  
sleep  
And well-earned rest, he bade his  
charioteer  
Yoke to his chariot three unbroken colts  
Which lately o'er the endless Scythian  
plain  
Careered, untamed; and, through the  
sleeping camp,  
Beneath the lucid aspect of the night,  
He sped as speeds the wind. The  
great stars hung  
Like lamps above the plain; the great  
stars sank

And faded in the dawn; the hot red  
sun  
Leapt from the plain; noon faded into  
eve;  
Again the same stars lit the lucid night;  
And still, with scarce a pause, those  
fierce hoofs dashed  
Across the curved plain onward, till he  
saw  
Far off the well-lit palace casements  
gleam  
Whercin his love was set.

Then suddenly  
He checked his panting team, the rapid  
wheels  
Ceased, and his mail and royal garb he  
hid  
Beneath a rich robe such as nobles use  
By Tanais; and to the lighted hall  
He passed alone, bidding his charioteer  
Await him in the darkness by the gate.

Now, when the Prince drew near the  
vestibule,  
The feast long time had sped, and all  
the guests  
Had eaten and drunk their fill; and he  
unseen,  
Through the close throng of serving men  
and maids  
Around the door, like some belated guest  
To some obscurer station slipped, and  
took  
The wine-cup with the rest, who mar-  
velled not  
To see him come, nor knew him; only  
she  
Who sent the message whispered him  
a word:  
"Have courage; she is there, and  
cometh soon.  
Be brave; she loves thee only; watch  
and wait."

Even then the King Omartes, where he  
 sate  
 On high among his nobles, gave com-  
 mand  
 To summon from her maiden chamber  
 forth  
 The Princess. And obedient to the call,  
 Robed in pure white, clothed round  
 with maiden shame,  
 Full of vague hope and tender yearning  
 love,  
 To the high royal throne Odatis came.

And when the Prince beheld the maid,  
 and saw  
 The wonder which so long had filled  
 his soul—  
 His vision of the still night clothed with  
 life  
 And breathing earthly air — and marked  
 the heave  
 Of her white breast, and saw the tell-  
 tale flush  
 Crimson her cheek with maiden  
 modesty,  
 Scarce could his longing eager arms  
 forbear  
 To clasp the virgin round, so fair she  
 seemed.  
 But, being set far down from where the  
 King  
 Sat high upon the dais 'midst the crowd  
 Of eager emulous faces looking love,  
 None marked his passionate gaze, or  
 stretched-forth hands;  
 Till came a pause, which hushed the  
 deep-drawn sigh  
 Of admiration, as the jovial King,  
 Full tender of his girl, but flushed with  
 wine,  
 Spake thus to her :  
 " Daughter, to this high feast  
 Are bidden all the nobles of our land.

Now, therefore, since to wed is good  
 and life  
 To the unwedded woman seems a load  
 Which few may bear, and none desire  
 I prithet,  
 This jewelled chalice taking, mingh  
 wine  
 As well thou knowest, and the honeyed  
 draught  
 Give to some noble youth of those thou  
 seest  
 Along the well-ranged tables, know  
 well  
 That him to whom thou givest, thou  
 shalt wed.  
 I fetter not thy choice, girl. I grow old  
 I have no son to share the weight of rule  
 And fain would see thy children ere  
 die."

Then, with a kiss upon her blushing  
 cheek,  
 He gave the maid the cup. The cressets  
 light  
 Fell on the jewelled chalice, which  
 gave back  
 A thousand answering rays. Silent she  
 stood  
 A moment, half in doubt, then down  
 the file  
 Of close-ranked eager faces flushed with  
 hope,  
 And eyes her beauty kindled more than  
 wine,  
 Passed slow, a breathing statue. Her  
 white robe  
 Among the purple and barbaric gold  
 Showed like the snowy plumage of a  
 dove,  
 As down the hall, the cup within her  
 hands,  
 She, now this way regarding and now  
 that,

Passed, with a burning blush upon her  
cheek ;  
And on each youthful noble her large  
eyes  
Rested a moment only, icy cold ;  
Though many indeed were there, brave,  
fair to see,  
Fit for a maiden's love ; but never at  
all  
The one o'ermastering vision of her  
dream  
Rose on her longing eyes, till hope  
itself  
Drew faint, and, ere she gained the  
end, she turned  
Flickering to where, along the opposite  
wall,  
Sat other nobles young and brave as  
those,  
But not the fated vision of her dream.

Meanwhile the Prince, who 'mid the  
close-set throng  
Of humbler guests was hidden, saw her  
come  
And turn ere she had marked him, and  
again  
Down the long line of princely revellers  
Pass slow as in a dream ; and all his  
soul  
Drew sick with dread lest haply, seeing  
not  
The one expected face, and being  
meek  
And dutiful, and reverent to her sire,  
She in despair might make some sudden  
choice  
And leave him lovelorn. And where'er  
she went  
He could not choose but gaze, as oft in  
sleep  
Some dreadful vision chains us that we  
fail

To speak or move, though to be still is  
death.  
And once he feared that she had looked  
on him  
And passed, and once he thought he  
saw her pause  
By some tall comely youth ; and then  
she reached  
The furthest wall, and as she turned  
her face  
And came toward him again to where  
the jars  
Of sweet wine stood for mingling, with  
a bound  
His heart went out to her ; for now her  
cheek  
As pale and lifeless as the icy moon,  
And the dead hope within her eyes,  
and pain  
Of hardly conquered tears, made sure  
his soul,  
Knowing that she was his.

But she, dear heart,  
Being sick indeed with love, and in  
despair,  
Yet reverencing her duty to her sire,  
Turned half-distraught to fill the fatal  
cup  
And with it mar her life.

But as she stood  
Alone within the vestibule and poured  
The sweet wine forth, slow, trembling,  
blind with tears,  
A voice beside her whispered, " Love,  
I am here ! "  
And looking round her, at her side she  
saw,  
A youthful mailed form—the festal robe  
Flung backward, and the face, the  
mouth, the eyes  
Whereof the vision filled her night and  
day.



Then straight, without a word, with  
 one deep sigh,  
 She held the wine-cup forth. He  
 poured out first  
 Libation to the goddess, and the rest  
 Drained at a draught, and cast his  
 arms round her,  
 And down the long-drawn sounding  
 colonnade  
 Snatched her to where without, beneath  
 the dawn,  
 The brave steeds waited and the  
 charioteer.  
 His robe he round her threw ; they saw  
 the flare  
 Of torches at the gate ; they heard the  
 shouts  
 Of hot pursuit grow fainter ; till at  
 last,  
 In solitude, across the rounding plain  
 They flew through waking day, until  
 they came  
 To Media, and were wed. And soon  
 her sire,  
 Knowing their love, consented, and  
 they lived  
 Long happy lives ; such is the might of  
 Love.

That is the tale the soldier from the  
 East,  
 Chares of Mytilenê, ages gone,  
 Told oftentimes at many a joyous feast  
 In Hellas ; and he said that all the  
 folk  
 In Media loved it, and their painters  
 limned  
 The story in the temples of their gods,  
 And in the stately palaces of kings,  
 Because they revered the might of  
 Love.

## IN WILD WALES.

## I.—AT THE EISTEDDIFOD. \*

The close-ranked faces rise,  
 With their watching, eager eyes,  
 And the banners and the mottoes blaze  
 above ;  
 And without, on either hand,  
 The eternal mountains stand,  
 And the salt sea river ebbs and flows  
 again,  
 And through the thin-drawn bridge the  
 wandering winds complain.

Here is the Congress met,  
 The bardic senate set,  
 And young hearts flutter at the voice of  
 fate ;  
 All the fair August day  
 Song echoes, harpers play,  
 And on the unaccustomed ear the  
 strange  
 Penillion rise and fall through change  
 and counter-change.

Oh Mona, land of song !  
 Oh mother of Wales ! how long  
 From thy dear shores an exile have I  
 been !

Still from thy lonely plains,  
 Ascend the old sweet strains,  
 And at the mine, or plough, or humble  
 home,  
 The dreaming peasant hears diviner  
 music come.

This innocent, peaceful strife,  
 This struggle to fuller life,  
 Is still the one delight of Cymric souls—  
 Swell, blended rhythms ! still  
 The gay pavilions fill.

Soar, oh young voices, resonant and  
fair ;

Still let the sheathed sword gleam  
above the bardic chair.

\* \* \* \*

The Menai ebbs and flows,  
And the song-tide wanes and goes,  
And the singers and the harp-players  
are dumb ;

The eternal mountains rise  
Like a cloud upon the skies,  
And my heart is full of joy for the  
songs that are still,  
The deep sea and the soaring hills, and  
the steadfast Omnipotent Will.

## II.—AT THE MEETING FIELD.

HERE is the complement of what I saw  
When late I sojourned in the halls of  
song,  
The greater stronger Force, the higher  
Law,  
Of those which carry Cymric souls  
along.

No dim Cathedral's fretted aisles were  
there,  
No gay pavilion fair, with banners  
hung :  
The eloquent pleading voice, the  
deep hymns sung,  
The bright sun, and the clear un-  
fettered air.

These were the only ritual, this the  
fane,  
A poor fane doubtless and a feeble  
rite  
For those who find religion in dim  
light,  
Strange vestments, incensed air, and  
blazoned pane.

But the rapt crowd, the reverent mute  
throng,

When the vast listening semi-circle  
round,

Rang to the old man's voice serenely  
strong,

Or swept along in stormy bursts of  
sound.

Where found we these in temples made  
with hands ?

Where, the low moan which marks  
the awakened soul ?

Where, this rude eloquence whose  
strong waves roll

Deep waters, swift to bear their Lord's  
commands ?

Where found we these ? 'neath what  
high fretted dome ?

I know not. I have knelt 'neath  
many, yet

Have heard few words so rapt and  
burning come,

Nor marked so many eyes divinely  
wet,

As here I knew—"What will you do,  
oh friends,

When life ebbs fast and the dim light  
is low,

When sunk in gloom the day of plea-  
sure ends,

And the night cometh, and your  
being runs slow,

And nought is left you of your revel-  
ries,

Your drunken nights, your wanton-  
ness, your ill—

And lo ! the last dawn rises cold and  
chill,

And lo ! the lightning of All-seeing eyes,

What will you do?" And when the  
low voice ceased,  
And from the gathered thousands  
surged the hymn,  
Some strong power choked my voice,  
my eyes grew dim.  
I knew that old man eloquent, a priest.

There is a consecration not of man,  
Nor given by laid-on hands nor  
acted rite,  
A priesthood fixed since the firm earth  
began,  
A dedication to the eye of Light,

And this is of them. What the form  
of creed  
I care not, hardly the fair tongue I  
know,  
But this I know, that when the con-  
course freed  
From that strong influence, went  
sedate and slow,

I thought when on the Galilean shore  
By the Great Priest the multitudes  
were led,  
The bread of life, miraculously more,  
Sufficed for all who came, and they  
were fed.

#### SUFFRAGES.

"SURELY," said a voice, "O Lord,  
Thy judgments  
Are dreadful and hard to understand.  
Thy laws which Thou madest, they  
withstand Thee,  
They stand against Thee and Thy  
command:  
Thy poor, they are with us evermore;  
They suffer terrible things and sore;

They are starved, they are sick, they  
die,  
And there is none to help or heed;  
They come with a great and bitter  
cry,  
They hardly dare to whisper, as they  
plead;  
And there is none to hear them, God or  
man;  
And it is little indeed that all our pity  
can.

What, and shall I be moved to tears,  
As I sit in this still chamber here alone,  
By the pity of it,—the childish lives  
that groan,  
The miseries and the sorrows, the hopes  
and the fears  
Of this wonderful legend of life, that is  
one and the same  
Though it differ in weal and in happi-  
ness, honour and fame,—  
Shall I turn, who am no more than a  
worm, to Thee,  
From the pity of it—the want, the  
misery,  
And with strong yearnings beat, and  
rebellions wild,  
Seeing death written, and pain, in the  
face of a child;—  
And yet art Thou unmoved!  
Ah, Lord, if Thou sawest surely!—and  
yet Thou dost see;  
And if Thou knewest indeed!—and  
yet all things are clear to Thee.

For, Lord, of a truth Thy great ones,  
Who have not their wealth of their own  
desert,  
Live ever equal lives and sure,  
And are never vexed nor suffer hurt,  
But through long untroubled years  
endure

Until they join Thee, and are in bliss ;  
Or, maybe, are carried away from  
Thee, and miss

Thy Face, which is too pure for them  
to see,

And are thenceforth in misery :

But, nevertheless, upon the earth

They come to neither sorrow nor  
dearth.

They are great, and they live out their  
lives, and Thou lettest them be ;

Thou dost not punish them here, if  
they despise

Thy poor and pass them by with averted  
eyes.

They are strong and mighty, and never  
in danger to fall ;

But Thou, Lord, art mighty and canst,  
and yet carest not at all.

But wherefore is it that such things  
are ;—

That want and famine, and blood and  
war

Are everywhere, and do prevail ?

And wherefore is it the same monoton-  
ous tale

Is ever told by the lips of men ?

For there is hardly so hard a heart

In the breast of a man who has taken  
his part

In the world, and has little children  
around his knees,

But is filled with great love for them as  
Thou art for these,

And would give up all for their good,  
and is vexed day and night

With fatherly doubts and fears and  
yearnings for right,

And grows sick, if evil come nigh them  
body or soul,

And yet is but a feeble thing, without  
strength or control.

But Thou art almighty for good ; yet  
Thy plagues, they come,

Hunger and want and disease, in a  
terrible sum ;

And the poor fathers waste, and are  
stricken with slow decay ;

And the children fall sick, and are  
starving, day after day ;

And the hospital wards are choked ;  
and the fire and the flood

Vex men still, and the leaguered cities  
are red with blood.

Ay, yet not the less, O Lord,

I know Thou art just and art good in-  
deed.

This is it that doth perplex my thought,  
So that I rest not content in any creed.

If I knew that Thou wert the Lord of  
Ill,

Then were I untouched still,

And, if I would, might worship at Thy  
shrine ;

Or if my mind might prove no Will  
Divine

Inspired the dull mechanical reign of  
Law.

But now, while Thou art surely, and  
art good,

And wouldst Thy creatures have in  
happiness,

Alway the sword, the plague prevail  
no less,

Not less, not less Thy laws are based  
in blood.

And such deep inequalities of lot  
Confuse our thought, as if Thy hand  
were not.

All blessings, health and wealth and  
honours spent

On some unworthy sordid instrument ;

Thy highest gift of genius flung away

On some vile thing of meanest clay,

Who fouls the ingrate lips, touched  
with Thy fire,  
With worse than common mire :  
How should I fail alone, when all things  
groan,  
To let my weak voice take a pleading  
tone !  
How should I speak a comfortable  
word  
When such things are, O Lord ! "

This is the cry that goes up for ever  
To Heaven from weak and striving  
souls :  
But the calm Voice makes answer to  
them never ;  
The undelaying chariot onward rolls.

But another voice : " O Lord of all, I  
bless Thee,  
I bless Thee and give thanks for all.  
Thou hast kept me from my childhood  
up,  
Thou hast not let me fall.  
All the fair days of my youth  
Thou wast beside, me and Thy truth.  
I bless Thee that Thou didst withhold  
The blight of fame, the curse of gold ;  
Because Thou hast spared my soul as  
yet,  
Amid the wholesome toil of each swift  
day,  
The tumult and the fret  
Which carry worldly lives from Thee  
away.  
I thank Thee for the sorrows Thou hast  
sent,  
Being in all things content  
To see in every loss a greater gain,  
A joy in every pain ;  
The losses I have known, since still I  
know  
Lives, hidden with Thee, are and grow.

I do not know, I cannot tell,  
How it may be, yet death and pain are  
well :  
I know that Thou art good and mild,  
Though sickness take and break the  
helpless child ;  
'Twas Thou, none else, that gav'st the  
mother's love,  
And even her anguish came from Thee  
above.  
I am content to be that which Thou  
wilt :  
Tho' humble be my pathway and ob-  
scure,  
Yet from all stain of guilt  
Keep Thou me pure.  
Or if Thy evil still awhile must find  
Its seat within my mind,  
Be it as Thou wilt, I am not afraid.

And for the world Thy hand has made,  
Thy beautiful world, so wondrous fair :  
Thy mysteries of dawn, Thy cloudless  
days ;  
Thy mountains, soaring high through  
Thy pure air ;  
Thy glittering sea, sounding perpetual  
praise ;  
Thy starlit skies, whence worlds un-  
numbered gaze ;  
Thy earth, which in Thy bounteous  
summer-tide  
Is clad in flowery robes and glorified ;  
Thy still primeval forests, deeply stirred  
By Thy great winds as by an unknown  
word ;  
Thy fair, light-winged creatures, blithe  
and free ;  
Thy dear brutes living, dying, silently :  
Shall I from them no voice to praise  
Thee find ?  
Thy praise is hymned by every balmy  
wind

That wanders o'er a wilderness of  
flowers ;  
By every happy brute which asks not  
why,  
But rears its brood and is content to die.  
From Thee has come whatever good is  
ours ;—  
The gift of love that doth exalt the  
race ;  
The gift of childhood with its nameless  
grace ;  
The gift of age which slow through ripe  
decay,  
Like some fair fading sunset dies away ;  
The gift of homes happy with honest  
wealth,  
And fair lives flowering in unbroken  
health,—  
All these are Thine, and the good gifts  
of brain,  
Which to heights greater than the earth  
can gain,  
And can our little minds project to  
Thee,  
Through Infinite Space—across Eter-  
nity.  
For these I praise Thy name ; but  
above all  
The precious gifts Thy bounteous hand  
lets fall,  
I praise Thee for the power to love the  
Right,  
Though Wrong awhile show fairer to  
the sight ;  
The power to sin, the dreadful power  
to choose  
The evil portion and the good re-  
fuse ;  
And last, when all the power of ill is  
spent,  
The power to seek Thy face and to  
repent."

This is the answering cry that goes for  
ever  
To Heaven from blest untroubled souls :  
But the calm Voice makes answer to  
them never ;  
The undelaying chariot onward rolls.

LOOK OUT, O LOVE.

Look out, O Love, across the sea :  
A soft breeze fans the summer night,  
The low waves murmur lovingly,  
And lo ! the beacon's fitful light.

Some day perchance, when I am gone,  
And muse by far-off tropic seas,  
You may be gazing here alone,  
On starlit waves and skies like these.

Or perhaps together, you and I,  
Rapt each in each, no other by,  
Shall watch again that fitful flame,  
And know that we are not the same.

Or maybe we shall come no more,  
But prisoned on some unknown shore,  
In dreams shall see that light again,  
And hear that starlit sea complain.

CLYTÆMNESTRA IN PARIS.

I SEEMED to pace the dreadful corridors  
Of a still foreign prison, blank and  
white,  
And in a bare and solitary cell  
To find a lonely woman, soft of voice  
And mild of eye, who never till life's  
end  
Should pass those frowning gates. Me-  
thought I asked her

The story of her crime, and what hard  
fate  
Left her, so gentle seeming, fettered  
there,  
Hopeless, a murderess at whose very  
name  
Men shuddered still. And to my ques-  
tioning  
Methought that dreadful soul made  
answer thus :

Yes, I suppose I liked him, though I  
know not ;  
I hardly know what love may be ; how  
should I?—  
I a young girl wedded without my will,  
As is our custom here, to a man old,  
Not perhaps in years, but dark expe-  
riences.  
What had we two in common, that  
worn man,  
And I, an untrained girl? It was not  
strange  
If when that shallow boy, with his bold  
tongue,  
And his gay eyes, and curls, and bud-  
ding beard,  
Flattered me, I was weak. I think all  
women  
Are weak sometimes, and overprone to  
love  
When the man is young, and straight,  
and 'twas a triumph  
To see the disappointed envious jades  
Wince as he passed them carelessly,  
nor heeded  
Their shallow wiles to trap him,—ay,  
a triumph !  
And that was all ; I hardly know, in-  
deed,  
If it was love that drove, or only pride  
To hold what others grudged me. Vain  
he was,

And selfish, and a coward, as you shall  
hear.

Handsome enough, I grant you, to  
betray  
A stronger soul than mine. Indeed, I  
think,  
He never cared for me nor I for him  
(For there were others after him) : I  
knew it,  
Then chiefest, when our comedy of life  
Was turning at the last to tragedy.

Now that I was unfaithful, a false  
wife,  
I value not men's sneers at a pin's  
point,  
We have a right to love and to be  
loved ;  
Not the mere careless tolerance of the  
spouse  
Who has none to give. True, if I were  
a nun,  
Vowed to a white and cloistered life, no  
doubt  
'Twere otherwise. They tell me there  
are women  
Who are so rapt by thoughts of the  
poor, of churches,  
Of public ends, of charity, of schools,  
Of Heaven knows what, they live their  
lives untouched  
By passion ; but for us, who are but  
women,  
Not bred on moonlight, made of  
common clay,  
Untrained for aught but common bour-  
geois life,  
Life is no mystical pale procession  
winding  
Its way from the cradle to the grave, but  
rather  
A thing of hot swift flashes, fierce de-  
light,

Good eating, dances, wines, and all the  
rest,  
When the occasion comes. I never  
loved him,  
I tell you ; therefore, maybe, did no  
sin.

“ But when this fellow must presume to  
boast,  
Grow cold, have scruples for his soul  
and mine,  
And turn to other younger lives, and  
pass  
My door to-day with this one, then with  
that,  
And all the gossips of the quarter  
sneered,  
And knew I was deserted, do you think  
it

A wonder that my eyes, opened at last,  
Saw all the folly and the wickedness  
(If sweet it were, where were the  
wickedness?)

Which bore such bitter fruit? Think  
you it strange

That I should turn for aid, ay, and re-  
venge,

To my wronged spouse—if wronged he  
be, indeed,

Who doth consent as he did? When I  
told him,

Amid my tears, he made but small  
pretence

Of jealousy at all ; only his pride  
Was perhaps a little wounded. And  
indeed

It took such long confessions, such  
grave pain

Of soul, such agony of remorse of  
mine

To move him but a little, that I grew  
So weary of it all, it almost checked  
My penitence, and left me free to choose

Another for my love ; but at the last,  
Long labour, feigned reports, the  
neighbours' sneers,

These drove him at the last, good easy  
man,

To such a depth of hatred, that my  
task

Grew lighter, and my heart.

He bade me write  
Loving appeals, recalling our past  
days

Together ; and I wrote them, using all  
The armoury of loving cozening words  
With which craft arms us women : but  
in vain,

For whether some new love engrossed,  
or whether

He wearied of me and my love, I know  
not,

Only, in spite of all, no answer came.

“ At length, since I could get no word  
from him,

My husband bade me write—or was  
it I

Who thought of the device? Pray  
you believe me,

I would speak nothing else than the  
whole truth,

But these sad dreadful deeds confuse  
the brain.

Well, perhaps 'twas I, who knew his  
weakness well ;

I do not know, but somehow it came to  
pass

I wrote a crafty letter, begging of him,  
By all our former kindness, former  
wrong,

If for the last time, recognizing well  
That all was done between us ever-  
more,

We might, for one last evening, meet  
and part.



And, knowing he was needy, and his  
greed,—  
'If only he would come,' I wrote to  
him,  
'I had some secret savings, and  
desired—  
For what need comes there closer than  
a friend's?—  
To help him in his trouble.'

Swift there came—  
The viper!—hypocritical words of love:  
Yes, he would come, for the old love  
still lived,  
He knew it, ah, too well; not all the  
glamour  
Of other eyes and lips could ever quench  
The fire of that mad passion. He  
would come,  
Loving as ever, longing for the day.

"Now when we had the answer,  
straight we three—  
My husband and myself, and his weak  
brother,  
Whose daughter to her first communion  
went  
That very day,—and I, too, took the  
Host  
As earnest of changed life,—we three,  
I say,  
At a little feast we made to celebrate  
The brothers reconciled (in families  
There come dissensions, as you know),  
devised  
His punishment. We hired, in a still  
suburb,  
A cottage standing backward from the  
street,  
Beyond an avenue of sycamores;  
A lonely place, unnoticed. Day by  
day  
We went, we three together—for I  
feared

Lest, if there were no third, the strength  
of youth

Might bear my husband down—we  
went to make

All needful preparations. First we  
spread

Over all the floor a colour like to blood,  
For deep's the stain of blood, and what  
shall cleanse it?

Also, my husband, from a neighbour-  
ing wood,

Had brought a boar-trap, sharp with  
cruel knives

And jagged teeth, to close with a snap  
and tear

The wild beast caught within it. But  
I deemed

The risk too great, the prey might slip  
away;

Therefore, that he might meet his  
punishment,

And to prevent the sound of cries and  
groans,

My husband fashioned for his lips a  
gag,

And on the mantel left it, and the  
means

To strike a light. And being thus  
prepared,

We three returned to Paris; there long  
time

We sate eating and drinking of the  
best,

As those do who have taken a resolve  
Whence no escape is, save to do and  
die.

"Then the two men went back and  
left me there,

With all my part to do. It was an  
hour

Or more before the time when my poor  
dupe

Had fixed to meet me. Wandering  
 thus alone  
 Through the old streets, seeing the  
 common sights  
 Of every day, the innocent child-faces  
 Homing from school, so like my little  
 ones,  
 I seemed to lose all count of time. At  
 length,  
 Because it was the Ascension Feast,  
 there came  
 A waft of music from the open doors  
 Of a near church, and, entering in, I  
 found  
 The incensed air, all I remembered  
 well—  
 The lights, the soaring chants, the  
 kneeling crowds,  
 When I believed and knelt. They  
 seemed to soothe  
 My half bewildered fancy, and I  
 thought—  
 What if a woman, who mayhap had  
 sinned  
 But lightly, wishing to repair her  
 wrong,  
 And bound thereby to some dark daring  
 deed  
 Of peril, should come here, and kneel  
 awhile,  
 And ask a blessing for the deed, of  
 her  
 Who is Heaven's Queen and knows our  
 weaknesses,  
 Being herself a woman ! So I knelt  
 In worship, and the soaring voices  
 clear  
 And the dim heights and suffrage-laden  
 air  
 Filled me with comfort for my soul, and  
 nerved  
 My failing heart, and winged time's  
 lagging flight,

Till to the hour was come when I  
 should go  
 To meet him for the last time.

"When we left  
 The city far behind, the sweet May  
 night  
 Was falling on the quiet village street ;  
 There was a scent of hawthorn on the  
 air  
 As we passed on with feint of loving  
 words,—  
 Passed slow like lovers to the appointed  
 place,  
 Passed to the place of punishment and  
 doom.

"But when we reached the darkling  
 avenue  
 Of sycamores, which to the silent  
 house  
 Led through a palpable gloom, I felt  
 him shudder  
 With some blind vague presentiment  
 of ill,  
 And he would go no further ; but I  
 clung  
 Around him close, laughed all his fear  
 to scorn,  
 Whispered words in his ear, and step  
 by step,  
 My soul on reparation being bent,  
 Drew him reluctant to the fated door  
 Where lay my spouse in ambush, and  
 swift death.

"I think I hear the dreadful noise of  
 the key,  
 Turning within the disused lock, the  
 hall  
 Breathing a false desertion, the loud  
 sound

Of both our footsteps echoing through  
the house.

I could not choose but tremble. Yet  
I knew

'Twas but a foolish weakness. Then  
I struck

A match, and in the burst of sudden  
light

I saw the ruddy cheek grown ashy  
pale,

And as he doffed his hat, I marked the  
curls

On his white forehead, and the boyish  
grace

Which hung around him still, and al-  
most felt

Compassion. Then the darkness came  
again,

And hid him, and I groped to find his  
hand,

Clutched it with mine, and led him to  
the door.

"But when within the darkling room  
we were

Where swift death waited him, not  
dalliance,

Three times my trembling fingers failed  
to wake

The twinkling light which scarce could  
pierce the gloom

Which hid my husband. Oh, to see  
his face

When the dark aspect and the furious  
eyes

Glared out on him ! 'I am lost !' he  
cried, 'I am lost !'

And then the sound of swift and  
desperate fight

And a death struggle. Listening, as I  
stood

Without, with that mean craven hound,  
our brother,

I heard low cries of rage, and knew  
despair

And youth had nerved the unarmed in  
such sort

As made the conflict doubtful. Then  
I rushed

Between them, threw my arms around  
him, clogged

His force and held him fast, crying the  
while,

'Wretch, would you kill my husband !'  
—held him fast,

As coils a serpent round the escaping  
deer,

Until my husband, hissing forth his  
hate,

'Villain, I pierce thy heart as thou  
hast mine,'

Stabbed through and through his heart.

"But oh, but oh  
The lonely road, beneath the dreadful  
stars !

To the swift stream, we three—nay,  
nay, we four—

One on the child's poor carriage  
covered o'er,

And three who drew him onward, on  
the road,

That dead thing, having neither eye  
nor ear,

Which late was full of life, and strife,  
and hate.

On that dumb silence, came no way-  
farer,

And once the covering which concealed  
our load

Slipped down, and left the ghastly  
blood-stained thing

Open to prying eyes, but none were  
there ;

And then the darkling river, and the  
sound

When, with lead coiled around it, the  
dead corpse  
Sank with a sullen plunge within the  
deep,  
And took with it the tokens of our crime.

"Then with a something of relief, as  
those  
Who have passed through some great  
peril all unharmed,  
We went and burned the blood-stained  
signs of death,  
And left the dreadful place, and once  
more sped  
To Paris and to sleep, till the new day,  
Now risen to high noon, touched our  
sad dreams.

"And that day, since we could not  
work as yet,  
We to the Picture Gallery went, and  
there  
We took our fill of nude voluptuous  
limbs,  
Mingled with scenes of horror bathed  
in blood,  
Such as our painters love. So week  
by week,  
Careless and unafraid, we spent our  
days,  
Till when that sad night faded; swift  
there rose,  
Bursting the weights that kept it, the  
pale corpse,  
A damning witness from the deep, and  
brought  
The dreadful past again, and with it  
doom.

"You know how we were tried, and  
how things went,  
The treasoning speeches, the brow-beat-  
ing judge,

The petty crafts which make the  
pleader's art,  
The dolts who sit in judgment, when  
the one  
Who knows all must be silent; but you  
know not  
The intolerable burden of suspense,  
The hard and hateful gaze of hungry  
eyes  
Which gloat upon your suffering. When  
doom came  
It was well to know the worst, and  
hear no more  
The half-forgotten horrors. But I  
think  
The sense of common peril, common  
wrong,  
Knits us in unity indissoluble,  
Closer than years of converse. When  
my husband,  
Braving his doom, embraced me as he  
went:  
'Wife, so thou live I care not,' all my  
heart  
Went out to him for a moment, and I  
cried,  
'Let me die too, my guilt is more than  
his.'

"Some quibble marred the sentence,  
and once more  
The miserable tale was told afresh:  
Once more I stood before those hungry  
eyes,  
And when 'twas done we went forth  
slaves for life,  
Both with an equal doom, and ever since  
We suffer the same pains in solitude,  
Slaves fettered fast, whom only death  
sets free.

"That is my tale told truly. Now you  
know,

Sir, of what fashion I am made : a  
 woman  
 Gentle, you see, and mild eyed. If I  
 sinned  
 Surely there was temptation, and I  
 sought  
 Such reparation as I could. There are  
 here  
 Tigresses, and not women, black of  
 brow  
 And strong of arm, who have struck  
 down or stabbed  
 Husband, or child, or lover, not as I,  
 But driven by rage and jealousy, and  
 drink,  
 These creatures of the devil, as I pass  
 I see them shrink and shudder. The  
 young priest  
 Of the prison, a well-favoured lad he  
 is,  
 When I confessed to him bore on his  
 brow  
 Cold drops of agony ; the Sister grew  
 So pale at what I told her, that I  
 thought  
 She was like to swoon away, until I  
 soothed her.  
 Poor wretch, she has much to learn ;  
 and here I am,  
 And shall be till my hair turns grey,  
 my eyes  
 Grow dim, and I have clean forgotten  
 all  
 That brought me here, and all my  
 former life  
 Fades like a once-heard tale. In the  
 long nights,  
 As I lie alone in my cell like any  
 nun,  
 I wake sometimes with a start, and  
 seem to hear  
 That rusty lock turn, and those echoing  
 feet

Down that dark passage, and I seem to  
 see  
 The dreadful stare of those despairing  
 eyes,  
 And then there sounds, a plunge in  
 the deep, and I  
 Lie shivering till the dawn. I have no  
 comfort,  
 Except the holy Mass ; for see you,  
 sir,  
 I was devout until they scoffed at me.  
 And now I know there is a hell indeed,  
 Since this place is on earth. I do not  
 think  
 I have much cause to fear death, should  
 it come ;  
 For whoso strives for Duty, all the  
 Saints  
 And the Madonna needs must love,  
 and I,  
 I have done what penitence could do ;  
 and here  
 What have I of reward ?—my children  
 taken  
 As clean from me as if they were dead  
 indeed,  
 Trained to forget their mother. Sir, I  
 see,  
 Beyond these shallow phantasms of  
 life ;  
 And this I hold, that one whose con-  
 science shows  
 As clear as mine must needs be  
 justified.  
 I love the holy Mass, and take the  
 Host  
 As often as I may, being of good  
 heart.  
 For what was it she did in Holy Writ,  
 The Kenite's wife of old ? I do not  
 read  
 That women shrunk from her because  
 she drove

The nail through her guest's brain ;  
 nay, rather, praise  
 Was hers : yet was she not betrayed  
 as I,  
 Nor yet repentant of her wrong and  
 seeking  
 To do what good was left. But look  
 you, sir,  
 If I was once repentant, that is past :  
 I hate those black-browed women, who  
 turn from me,  
 That smooth priest and that poor fool  
 with her cross,  
 And that strange pink-and-whiteness  
 of the nun.  
 And sometimes when they come I let  
 them hear  
 Such things as make the pious hypocrites  
 turn  
 And cross themselves. And for that  
 tigress crew,  
 If I might only steal to their cells at  
 night  
 With a knife, I would teach them,  
 what it is to stab ;  
 Or even without one, that these little  
 hands  
 Can strangle with the best.

Ah, you draw back,  
 You too are shocked forsooth. Listen,  
 you wretch,  
 Who are walking free while I am  
 prisoned here :  
 How many thoughts of murder have  
 you nursed  
 Within your miserable heart ! how  
 many  
 Low, foul desires which would degrade  
 the brute !  
 Do you think I do not know you men ?  
 What was it  
 That kept your hands unstained, but  
 accident ?—

Accident, did I say ? or was it rather  
 Cowardice, that you feared the stripes  
 of the law,  
 And did not dare to do your will or  
 die ?—  
 Accident ! then, I pray you, where the  
 merit  
 To have abstained ? Or if you claim,  
 indeed,  
 Such precious self-restraint as keeps  
 your feet  
 From straying, where the credit ? since  
 it came  
 A gift as much unearned as other's ill,  
 Which lurked for them a little tiny  
 speck  
 Hidden in the convolutions of the  
 brain,  
 To grow with their growth, and wax  
 with their years, and leave  
 The wretch at last in Hell. Do you  
 deem it just,  
 The Potter with our clay upon His  
 wheel  
 Should shape it in such form ? I love  
 not God,  
 Being such ; I hate Him rather : I,  
 His creature,  
 I do impugn His justice or His power,  
 I will not feign obedience—I, a  
 woman,  
 Of a soft nature, who would love my  
 love,  
 And my child, and nothing more ; who  
 am, instead,  
 A murderess, as they tell me, pining  
 here  
 In hell before my time."

Even as she spake  
 I seemed to be again as when I saw  
 The murderess of old time ; and once  
 again

Within that modern prison, blank and  
white,  
There came the viewless trouble in the  
air  
Which took her, and the sweep of  
wings unseen,  
And terrible sounds which swooped on  
her and hushed  
Her voice and seemed to occupy her  
soul  
With horror and despair; and as I  
passed  
The crucifix within the corridor,  
"How long?" I cried, "How long?"

## PICTURES—III.

THE sad slow dawn of winter; frozen  
trees  
And trampled snow within a lonely  
wood;  
One shrouded form, which to the city  
flees;  
And one, a masquer, lying in his  
blood.

A full sun blazing with unclouded day,  
Till the bright waters mingle with the  
sky;  
And on the dazzling verge, uplifted  
high;  
White sails mysterious slowly pass  
away.

Hidden in a trackless and primeval  
wood,  
Long-buried temples of an unknown  
race,

And one colossal idol; on its face  
A changeless sneer, blighting the  
solitude.

A fair girl half undraped, who blithely  
sings;  
Her white robe poised upon one budd-  
ing breast;  
While at her side, invisible, uncon-  
fessed,  
Love folds her with the shelter of his  
wings.

Black clouds embattled on a lurid sky,  
And one keen flash, like an awakened  
soul,  
Piercing the hidden depths, while  
momently  
One waits to hear enormous thunders  
roll.

Two helpless girls upon a blazing wall,  
The keen flames leaping always high  
and higher;  
But faster, faster than the hungry fire,  
Brave hearts which climb to save them  
ere they fall.

A youthful martyr, looking to the skies  
From rack and stake, from torment and  
disgrace;  
And suddenly heaven opened to his  
eyes,  
A beckoning hand, a tender heavenly  
face.

A home on a fair English hill ; away  
Stretch undulating plains, now gold  
    now green,  
With park and lake and glade, and  
    homestead grey ;  
And crowning all, the blue sea dimly  
    seen.

---

A lifeless, voiceless, world of age-long  
    snow,  
Where winter crawls on slow through  
    endless night,  
And safe within a low hut's speck of  
    light,  
Strong souls alert and hopeful, by the  
    glow.

---

A great ship forging slowly from the  
    shore,  
And on the broad deck weeping figures  
    bent ;  
And on the gliding pierhead, sorrow-  
    spent,  
Those whom the voyagers shall see no  
    more.

CONFESSION.

WHO is there but at times has seen,  
While his past days before him stand,  
In all the chances which have been,  
The guidance of a hidden Hand,

Which still has ruled his growing life,  
Through weal and woe, through joy  
    and pain,  
Through fancied good, through useless  
    strife,  
And empty pleasure sought in vain ;

Which often has withheld the meed  
He longed for once, with yearnings  
    blind,  
And given the truest prize indeed,  
The harvest of a blessed mind ;

And so accepts the common lot  
Content, whate'er the Ruler would,  
Since all that has been, or has not,  
Springs from a hidden root of good ?

\* \* \* \* \*  
Yet some there are maybe to-day,  
Whose childhood at the mother's knee  
Was taught to bow itself and pray,  
Nor ever thirsted to be free,

Who now, 'mid warring voices loud,  
Have lost the faith they held before,  
Nor through the jangling of the crowd  
Can hear the earlier message more.

A brute Fate vexes them, the reign  
Of dumb laws, speeding onward still,  
Regardless of the waste and pain,  
Which all the labouring earth do fill.

They look to see the rule of Right ;  
They find it not, and in its stead  
But slow survivals, born of Might,  
And all the early Godhead dead ;

They see it not, and droop and faint  
And are unhappy, doubting God ;  
Yet every step their feet have trod  
Was trodden before them by a saint.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Oh, doubting soul, look up, behold  
The eternal heavens above thy head,  
The solid earth beneath, its mould  
Compacted of the unnumbered dead.

Here the eternal problems grow,  
And with each day are solved and done,



When some spent life, like melting  
snow,  
Breathes forth its essence to the sun.

As death is, life is—without end;  
Wrong with right mingles, joy with  
pain;  
Forbid two meeting streams to blend,  
'Twere not more hopeless, nor more  
vain.

Though Death with Life, though Wrong  
with Right,  
Are bound within the scheme of things,  
Yet can our souls, on soaring wings,  
Gain to a loftier purer height,

Where death is not, nor any life,  
Nor right nor wrong, nor joy nor pain;  
But changeless Being, lacking strife,  
Doth through all change, unchanged  
remain.

Should Wrong prevail o'er all the  
earth,  
'Twere nought if only we discern  
The one great truth, which if we learn,  
All else beside is little worth.

That Right, is that which must prevail,  
If not here, there, if not now, then,  
Is the one Truth which shall not fail,  
For all the doubts and fears of men.

What if a myriad ages still  
Of wrong and pain, of waste and blood,  
Confuse our thought, triumphant Good  
At length, at last, our souls can fill

With such assurance as the Voice  
Which from the fiery mountain pealed,  
And bade the kneeling hosts rejoice  
That God was in His laws revealed.

Nay even might our thought conceive  
The final victory of Ill,  
Not so, were it folly to believe  
That Right is higher, purer still.

Who knows the Eternal "Ought"  
knows well  
That whoso loves and seeks the Right,  
For him God shines with changeless  
light,  
Ay, to the lowest deeps of Hell.

And whoso knoweth God indeed,  
The fixed foundations of his creed  
Know neither changing nor decay,  
Though all creation pass away.

### LOVE UNCHANGED.

My love, my love, if I were old,  
My body bent, my blood grown cold,  
With thin white hairs upon my brow,  
Say wouldst thou think of me as now?  
Wouldst thou cling to me still,  
As down life's sloping hill  
We came at last through the unresting  
years?

Art thou prepared for tears,  
For time's sure-coming losses,  
For life's despites and crosses,  
My love, my love?

Ah! brief our little, little day;  
Ah! years that fleet so fast away;  
Before our summer scarce begun,  
Look, spring and blossom-tide are  
done!

When all things hasten past,  
How should love only last?  
How should our souls alone unchanged  
remain?—

Come pleasure or come pain,

In days of joy and gladness,  
In years of grief and sadness,  
Love shall be love !

AT THE END.

WHEN the five gateways of the soul  
Are closing one by one,  
When our being's currents slowly roll  
And day is done,  
What shall our chiefest comfort be  
Amid this misery ?

Not to have stores heaped up on high  
Of gold and precious things,  
Not to have flown from sky to sky  
On Fame's wide wings,—  
These things a little space do last,  
And then are overpast.

Nor to have worked with patient brain  
In senate or in mart,  
To have gained the meed which those  
attain  
Who have played their part,—  
Effort is fair, success is sweet,  
But leave life incomplete.

Nor to have said, as the fool says,  
"Be merry, soul, rejoice ;  
"Thou hast laid up store for many days."

Oh, foolish voice !  
Already at thy gate the feet  
Of the corpse-bearers meet.

Nor to have heaped up precious store  
Of all the gains of time,  
Of long-dead sages' treasured lore,  
Or deathless rhyme,—  
Though Learning be a comely maid,  
Death maketh her afraid.

Nor to have drained the cup of youth,  
To the sweet maddening lees ;  
Nor, rapt by dreams of Hidden Truth,  
To have spurned all these ;—  
Pleasure, Denial, touch not him  
Whose body and mind are dim.

Not one of all these things shall I  
For comfort use, or strength,  
When the sure hour, when I must die,  
Takes me at length ;  
One thought alone shall bring redress  
For that great heaviness :—

That I have held each struggling soul  
As of one kin and blood,  
That one sure link doth all control  
To one close brotherhood ;  
For who the race of men doth love,  
Loves also Him above.

THREE BRETON POEMS.

I.

THE ORPHAN GIRL OF  
LANNION.

IN seventeen hundred and eighty-three,  
To Lannion came dole and misery.

Mignon an orphan, as good as fair,  
Served in the little hostelry there.

One darkling night, when the hour was  
late,  
Two travellers rang at the outer gate.

"Quick, hostess! supper, red wine,  
and food ;  
We have money to pay, so that all be  
good."

When they had drunken enough, and  
more,

"Here is white money to pay the score.

"And now shall your little serving-  
maid come,  
With her lantern lighted, to guide us  
home?"

"Gentles, in all our wide Brittany  
There is no man would harm her, so let  
it be."

Forth went the maid, full of innocent  
pride,  
Fearless and free, with her light by her  
side.

\* \* \* \* \*  
When they were far on their lonely  
way,  
They began to whisper, and mutter,  
and say,

"Little maid, your face is as fair and  
bright  
As the foam on the wave in the morn-  
ing light."

"Gentles, I pray you, flatter me not :  
It is as God made it—no other, God  
wot ;

"And were it fairer, I tell you true—  
Ay, a hundred times fairer—'twere  
nought to you."

"To judge, little maid, by your sober  
speech,  
You know all the good priests at the  
school can teach ;

"To judge from your accents, discreet  
and mild,  
You were bred in the convent cloister,  
my child."

"No teacher had I, neither priest nor  
nun ;

There was no one to teach me on earth,  
not one.

"But while by my father's poor hearth  
I wrought,  
God filled me with many a holy  
thought."

"Set down your lantern and put out  
the light.  
Here is gold : none can help you, 'tis  
dead of night."

"Good sirs ! for my brother the young  
priest's sake ;  
If he heard such sayings his heart would  
break."

\* \* \* \* \*  
"Oh, plunge me down fathoms deep in  
the sea,  
Of your mercy, rather than this thing  
be !

"Rather than this—'twere a lighter  
doom—  
Oh bury me quick in a living tomb !"

\* \* \* \* \*  
The motherly hostess, sore afraid,  
Waited in vain for her little maid.

She watched by the chill hearth's flicker-  
ing light  
Till the bell tolled twice through the  
black dead night.

Then cried, "Up, serving-men, sleep  
no more !  
Help !—little maid Mignon lies drowned  
in gore."

\* \* \* \* \*

By the cross she lay dead, in the dead  
cold night,  
But beside her her lantern was still  
alight !

II.

THE FOSTER BROTHER.

Of all the noble damsels, in all our  
Brittany,  
Gwennola was the sweetest far, a maiden  
fair to see.

Scarce eighteen summers shed their  
gold upon her shapely head,  
Yet all who loved the fair girl best were  
numbered with the dead—

Her father and her mother, and eke  
her sisters dear.  
Ah ! Mary, pity 'twas to see her shed  
the bitter tear

At her casement in the castle, where a  
step-dame now bare sway,  
Her dim eyes fixed upon the sea, which  
glimmered far away.

For three long years she watched in  
vain, in dole and misery,  
To see her foster brother's sail rise up  
from under sea ;

For three long years she watched in  
vain, hoping each day would send  
The only heart which beat to hers, her  
lover and her friend.

"Go, get you gone and tend the kine,"  
the cruel step-dame said ;  
"Leave brooding over long-past years :  
go, earn your daily bread."

She woke her, ere the darkling dawns,  
while yet 'twas dead of night,  
To sweep the floors and cleanse the  
house, and set the fires alight ;

To fetch the water from the brook,  
again and yet again,  
With heavy toil and panting breath,  
and young form bent in twain.

\* \* \* \*

One darkling winter morning, before  
the dawning light,  
With ringing hoofs, across the brook  
there rode a noble knight :

"Good morrow, gracious maiden, and  
art thou free to wed ?"  
And she, so young she was and meek,  
"I know not, sir," she said.

"I prithee tell me, maiden, if thou art  
fancy-free ?"  
"To none, sir, have I plighted yet my  
maiden troth," said she.

"Then take, fair maid, this ring of  
gold, and to your step-dame say,  
That to-day your troth is plighted to a  
knight from far away ;

"That at Nantes a battle fierce was  
fought, wherein his squire was  
slain,  
And he himself lies stricken sore upon  
his bed of pain ;

"But when three weeks are overpast,  
whatever fate betide,  
He will come himself full gaily, and  
claim thee for his bride."

Affrighted ran she to her home, when,  
 lo, a wondrous thing !  
 For on her slender finger blazed her  
 foster brother's ring.

## II.

The weeks crept onward slowly, crept  
 slowly—one, two, three ;  
 But never came the young knight, no  
 never more came he.

Come, it is time that you were wed,  
 for I have sought for you  
 A bridegroom fitted to your rank, an  
 honest man and true."

"Nay, nay, I prithee, step-dame, there  
 is none that I can wed,  
 Only my foster brother dear I love,  
 alive or dead.

"With this ring his troth he plighted,  
 and whatever fate betide,  
 He will come himself full gaily, and  
 claim me for his bride."

"Peace, with thy golden wedding-ring !  
 peace, fool, or I will teach  
 With blows thy senseless chattering  
 tongue to hold discreeter speech ;

"To-morrow thou shalt be the bride,  
 whether thou wilt or not,  
 Of Giles the neat-herd, honest man :  
 ay, this shall be thy lot."

"Of Giles the neat-herd, saidst thou ?  
 oh, I shall die of pain !  
 Oh mother, dear dead mother, that thou  
 wert in life again !"

"Go, cry and wail without the house ;  
 go, feed on misery :  
 Go, take thy fill of moans and tears, for  
 wedded thou shalt be."

## III.

Just then the ancient sexton, with the  
 bell that tolls the dead,  
 Went up and down the country side,  
 and these the words he said :—

"Pray for the soul of one who was a  
 brave and loyal knight,  
 Who bare at Nantes a grievous hurt,  
 what time they fought the fight :

"To-morrow eve, at set of sun, amid  
 the gathering gloom,  
 From the white church they bear him  
 forth, to rest within the tomb."

## IV.

"Thou art early from the wedding  
 feast !" "Good truth, I could  
 not stay ;  
 I dared not see the piteous sight, and  
 therefore turned away ;

"I could not bear the pity and the  
 horror in her eyne,  
 As she stood so fair, in blank despair,  
 within the sacred shrine.

"Around the hapless maiden, all were  
 weeping bitterly,  
 And the good old rector at the church,  
 a heavy heart had he ;

"Not a dry eye was around her, save  
 the step-dame stern alone,  
 Who looked on with an evil smile, as  
 from a heart of stone ;

"And when the ringers rang a peal, as  
now they came again,  
And the women whispered comfort, yet  
her heart seemed rent in twain.

"High in the place of honour at the  
marriage feast she sate,  
Yet no drop of water drank she, and  
no crumb of bread she ate ;

"And when at last, the feast being  
done, they would light the bride  
to bed,  
The ring from off her hand she flung,  
the wreath from off her head,

"And with wild eyes that spoke de-  
spair, and locks that streamed  
behind,  
Into the darkling night she fled, as  
swiftly as the wind."

V.

The lights within the castle were out,  
and all asleep ;  
Only, with fever in her brain, the maid  
would watch and weep.

The chamber door swung open. "Who  
goes there ?" "Do not fear,  
Gwen ; 'tis I, your foster brother."  
"Oh ! at last, my love, my  
dear !"

He raised her to the saddle, and his  
strong arm clasped her round,  
As, through the night, his charger white  
flew on without a sound.

"How fast we go, my brother !"  
"'Tis a hundred leagues and  
more."  
"How happy am I, happier than in all  
my life before !

"And have we far to go, brother ? I  
would that we were come."

"Have patience, sister ; hold me fast ;  
'tis a long way to our home."

The white owl shrieked around them,  
the wild things shrank in fear  
As through the night a cloud of light  
that ghostly steed drew near.

"How swift your charger is, brother !  
and your armour oh, how bright !  
Ah, no more you are a boy, brother,  
but in troth a noble knight !

"How beautiful you are, brother ! but  
I would that we were come."

"Have patience, sister ; hold me fast ;  
we are not far from home."

"Your breath is icy-cold, brother, your  
locks are dank and wet ;  
Your heart, your hands are icy-cold ;  
oh ! is it further yet ?"

"Have patience, sister ; hold me fast ;  
for we are nearly there ;  
Hist ! hear you not our marriage bells  
ring through the midnight air ?"

Even with the word, that ghostly steed  
neighed suddenly and shrill,  
Then trembled once through every limb,  
and like a stone stood still.

And lo, within a land they were, a land  
of mirth and pleasure,  
Where youths and maidens hand in  
hand danced to a joyous mea-  
sure ;

A verdant orchard closed them round  
 with golden fruit bedight,  
 And above them, from the heaven-  
 kissed hills, came shafts of golden  
 light ;

Hard by, a cool spring bubbled clear,  
 a fountain without stain,  
 Whereof the dead lips tasting, grew  
 warm with life again.

There was Gwennola's mother mild,  
 and eke her sisters dear :  
 Oh, land of joy and bliss and love !—  
 oh, land without a tear !

## VI.

But when the next sun on the earth,  
 brake from the gathered gloom,  
 From the white church, the young  
 maids bore, the virgin to her  
 tomb.

## III.

## AZENOR.

"SEAMEN, seamen, tell me true,  
 Is there any of your crew  
 Who in Armor town has seen  
 Azenor the kneeling queen ?"

"We have seen her oft indeed,  
 Kneeling in the self-same place ;  
 Brave her heart, though pale her face,  
 White her soul, though dark her weed."

## I.

Of a long-past summer's day  
 Envoys came from far away,  
 Mailed in silver, clothed with gold,  
 High on snorting chargers bold.

When the warder spied them near,  
 To the King he went, and cried,  
 "Twelve bold knights come pricking  
 here :  
 Shall I open to them wide ?"

"Opened let the great gates be ;  
 See the knights are welcomed all ;  
 Spread the board and deck the hall,  
 We will feast them royally."

"By our Prince's high command,  
 Who one day shall be our King,  
 We come to ask a precious thing—  
 Azenor your daughter's hand."

"Gladly will we grant your prayer :  
 Brave the youth, as we have heard.  
 Tall is she, milkwhite and fair,  
 Gentle as a singing bird."

Fourteen days high feast they made,  
 Fourteen days of dance and song ;  
 Till the dawn the harpers played ;  
 Mirth and joyance all day long.

"Now, my fair spouse, it is meet  
 That we turn us toward our home."  
 "As you will, my love, my sweet ;  
 Where you are, there I would come."

## II.

When his step-dame saw the bride,  
 Well-nigh choked with spleen was she :  
 "This pale-faced girl, this lump of  
 pride—  
 And shall she be preferred to me ?"

"New things please men best, 'tis true,  
 And the old are cast aside.  
 Natheless, what is old and tried  
 Serves far better than the new."

Scarce eight months had passed away  
When she to the Prince would come,  
And with subtlety would say,  
"Would you lose both wife and  
home ?

"Have a care, lest what I tell  
Should befall you ; it were best  
To have a care and guard you well,  
'Ware the cuckoo in your nest."

"Madam, if the truth you tell,  
Meet reward her crime shall earn,  
First the round tower's straitest cell,  
Then in nine days she shall burn."

III.

When the old King was aware,  
Bitter tears the greybeard shed.  
Tore in grief his white, white hair,  
Crying, "Would God that I were dead."

And to all the seamen said,  
"Good seamen, pray you tell me true,  
Is there, then, any one of you  
Can tell me if my child be dead ?".

"My liege, as yet alive is she,  
Though burned to-morrow shall she be :  
But from her prison tower, O King !  
Morning and eve we hear her sing.

"Morning and eve, from her fair throat  
Issues the same sweet plaintive note,  
'They are deceived ; I kiss Thy rod :  
Have pity on them, O my God !'"

IV.

Even as a lamb who gives its life  
All meekly to the cruel knife,  
White-robed she went, her soft feet  
bare,  
Self-shrouded in her golden hair,

And as she to her dreadful fate  
Fared on, poor innocent, meek and  
mild,  
"Grave crime it were," cried small and  
great,  
"To slay the mother and the child."

All wept sore, both small and great ;  
Only the step-dame smiling sate :  
"Sure 'twere no evil deed, but good,  
To kill the viper with her brood."

"Quick, good firemen, fan the fire  
Till it leap forth fierce and red ;  
Fan it fierce as my desire :  
She shall burn till she is dead."

Vain their efforts, all in vain,  
Though they fanned and fanned again ;  
The more they blew, the embers gray  
Faded and sank and died away.

When the judge the portent saw,  
Dazed and sick with fear was he :  
"She is a witch, she flouts the law ;  
Come, let us drown her in the sea."

V.

What saw you on the sea ? A boat  
Neither by sail nor oarsman sped ;  
And at the helm, to watch it float,  
An angel white with wings outspread ;

A little boat, far out to sea,  
And with her child a fair ladye,  
Whom at her breast she sheltered well,  
Like a white dove upon a shell.

She kissed, and clasped, and kissed  
again  
His little back, his little feet,  
Crooning a soft and tender strain,  
"Da-da, my dear ; da-da, my sweet.



" Ah, could your father see you, sweet,  
A proud man should he be to-day ;  
But we on earth may never meet,  
But he is lost and far away."

## VI.

In Armor town is such affright  
As never castle knew before,  
For at the midmost hour of night  
The wicked step-dame is no more.

" I see hell open at my side :  
Oh, save me, in God's name, my  
son !  
Your spouse was chaste ; 'twas I who  
lied ;  
Oh, save me, for I am undone !"

Scarce had she checked her lying tongue,  
A viper from her lips would glide,  
With threatening fangs, which hissed  
and stung,  
And pierced her marrow till she died.

Estsoons, to foreign realms the knight  
Went forth, by land and over sea ;  
Seeking in vain his lost delight,  
O'er all the round, round world went  
he.

He sought her East, he sought her  
West,  
Next to the hot South sped he forth,  
Then, after many a fruitless quest,  
He sought her in the gusty North.

There by some nameless island vast,  
His anchor o'er the side he cast ;

When by a brooklet's fairy spray,  
He spies a little lad at play.

Fair are his locks, and blue his eyes,  
As his lost love's or as the sea ;  
The good knight looking on them, sighs,  
" Fair child, who may thy father be ?"

" Sir, I have none save Him in heaven :  
Long years ago he went away,  
Ere I was born, and I am seven ;  
My mother mourns him night and day."

" Who is thy mother, child, and  
where ?"

" She cleanses linen white and fair,  
In yon clear stream." " Come, child,  
and we

Together will thy mother see."

He took the youngling by the hand,  
And, as they passed the yellow strand,  
The child's swift blood in pulse and  
arm

Leapt to his father's and grew warm.

" Rise up and look, oh mother dear ;  
It is my father who is here :  
My father who was lost is come—  
Oh, bless God for it !—to his home."

They knelt and blessed His holy name,  
Who is so good, and just, and mild,  
Who joins the sire and wife and child :  
And so to Brittany they came.

And may the blessed Trinity,  
Protect all toilers on the sea !

# GYCIA.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### PEOPLE OF BOSPHORUS.

*The KING OF BOSPHORUS.*

*ASANDER, Prince of Bosphorus.*

*LYSIMACHUS, a statesman.*

*MEGACLES, a chamberlain from the Imperial Court of Constantinople.*

*Three Courtiers, accompanying Asander.*

*Soldiers, etc.*

### PEOPLE OF CHERSON.

*LAMACHUS, Archon of the Republic of Cherson.*

*ZETHO, his successor.*

*THEODORUS, a young noble (brother to Irene), in love with Gycia.*

*BARDANES, first Senator.*

*Ambassador to Bosphorus.*

*The Senators of Cherson.*

*Two Labourers.*

*GYCIA, daughter of Lamachus.*

*IRENE, a lady—her friend, in love with Asander.*

*MELISSA, an elderly lady in waiting on Gycia.*

*Child, daughter of the Gaoler.*

*Citizens, etc.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—BOSPHORUS. THE KING'S PALACE.

*The KING, in anxious thought. To  
him LYSIMACHUS, afterwards ASAN-  
DER.*

*Enter LYSIMACHUS.*

*Lys.* What ails the King, that thus  
his brow is bent  
By such a load of care?

*King.* Lysimachus,  
The load of empire lies a weary weight,

On age-worn brains; tho' skies and  
seas may smile,  
And steadfast favouring Fortune sit  
serene,  
Guiding the helm of State, but well  
thou knowest—  
None better in my realm—through  
what wild waves,  
Quicksands, and rock-fanged straits,  
our Bosphorus,  
Laden with all our love, reels madly on  
To shipwreck and to ruin. From the  
North,  
Storm-cloud on storm-cloud issuing  
volleys forth

Fresh thunderbolts of war. The Emperor  
 Dallies within his closed seraglios,  
 Letting his eunuchs waste the might  
 of Rome,  
 While the fierce Scythian, in a surge of  
 blood,  
 Bursts on our bare-swept plains. Upon  
 the South,  
 Our rival Cherson, with a jealous eye,  
 Waits on our adverse chances, taking  
 joy  
 Of her republican guile in every check  
 And buffet envious Fortune deals our  
 State,  
 Which doth obey a King. Of all our  
 foes  
 I hate and dread these chiefly, for I fear  
 Lest, when my crown falls from my  
 palsied brow,  
 My son Asander's youth may prove too  
 weak  
 To curb these crafty burghers. Speak,  
 I pray thee,  
 Most trusty servant. Can thy loyal  
 brain  
 Devise some scheme whereby our dear-  
 loved realm  
 May break the mesh of Fate?

*Lys.* Indeed, my liege,  
 Too well I know our need, and long  
 have tossed  
 Through sleepless nights, if haply I  
 might find  
 Some remedy, but that which I have  
 found  
 Shows worse than the disease.

*King.* Nay, speak; what is it?  
 I know how wise thy thought.

*Lys.* My liege, it chanceth  
 The Archon Lamachus is old and spent.  
 He has an only child, a daughter,  
 Gycia.

The treasure of his age, who now  
 blooms forth  
 In early maidenhood. The girl is  
 fair  
 As is a morn in springtide; and her  
 father  
 A king in all but name, such reverence  
 His citizens accord him. Were it not  
 well  
 The Prince Asander should contract  
 himself  
 In marriage to this girl, and take the  
 strength  
 Of Cherson for her dowry, and the  
 power  
 Of their strong fleets and practised arms  
 to thrust  
 The invading savage backward?

*King.* Nay, my lord;  
 No more of this, I pray. There is no  
 tribe  
 Of all the blighting locust-swarms of  
 war,  
 Which sweep our wasted fields, I would  
 not rather  
 Take to my heart and cherish than  
 these vipers.  
 Dost thou forget, my lord, how of old  
 time,  
 In the brave days of good Sauromatus,  
 These venomous townsmen, shame-  
 lessly allied  
 With the barbarian hosts, brought us  
 to ruin;  
 Or, with the failing force of Cæsar  
 leagued,  
 By subtle devilish enginery of war,  
 Robbed Bosphorus of its own, when,  
 but for them,  
 Byzantium were our prey, and all its  
 might,  
 And we Rome's masters? Nay; I  
 swear to thee,

I would rather see the Prince dead at  
my feet,  
I would rather see our loved State sunk  
and lost,  
Than know my boy, the sole heir of my  
crown,  
The sole hope of my people, taken and  
noosed  
By this proud upstart girl. Speak not  
of it ;  
Ruin were better far.

*Lys.* My liege, I bear  
No greater favour to these insolent  
townsmen  
Than thou thyself. I, who have fought  
with them  
From my first youth—who saw my  
father slain,  
Not in fair fight, pierced through by  
honest steel,  
But unawares, struck by some villanous  
engine,  
Which, armed with inextinguishable  
fire,  
Flew hissing from the walls and slew at  
once  
Coward and brave alike ; I, whose  
young brother,  
The stripling who to me was as a son,  
Taken in some sally, languished till he  
died,  
Chained in their dungeons' depths ;—  
must I not hate them  
With hate as deep as hell ? And yet I  
know  
There is no other way than that  
*Asander*  
Should wed this woman. This alone  
can staunch  
The bleeding wounds of the State.

*King.* *Lysimachus,*  
I am old ; my will is weak, my body  
bent,

Not more than is my mind ; I cannot  
reason.

But hark ! I hear the ring of coursers'  
feet

Bespeak *Asander* coming. What an  
Of youth and morning breathes round  
him, and brings  
A light of hope again !

*Enter ASANDER from the chase.*

*Asan.* My dearest sire and King,  
art thou thus grave  
Of choice, or does our good *Lysimachus*,  
Bringing unwonted loads of carking  
care,  
O'ercloud thy brow ? I prithee, father,  
fret not ;  
There is no cloud of care I yet have  
known—  
And I am now a man, and have my  
cares—  
Which the fresh breath of morn, the  
hungry chase,  
The echoing horn, the jocund choir of  
tongues,  
(Or joy of some bold enterprise of  
war,  
When the swift squadrons smite the  
echoing plains,  
Scattering the stubborn spearmen, may  
not break,  
As does the sun the mists. Nay, look  
not grave ;  
My youth is strong enough for any  
burden  
Fortune can cast on me.

*King.* Couldst thou, *Asander*,  
Consent to serve the State, if it should  
bid thee

Wed without love ?

*Asan.* What, father, is that all ?  
I do not know this tertian fever, love,

Of which too oft my comrades groan  
 and sigh,  
 This green-sick blight, which turns a  
 lusty soldier  
 To a hysterical girl. Wed without  
 love?  
 One day I needs must wed, though  
 love I shall not.  
 And if it were indeed to serve the  
 State,  
 Nay, if 'twould smooth one wrinkle  
 from thy brow,  
 Why, it might be to-morrow. Tell me,  
 father,  
 Who is this paragon that thou designest  
 Shall call me husband? Some bar-  
 barbarian damsel  
 Reared on mare's milk, and nurtured  
 in a tent  
 In Scythia? Well, 'twere better than  
 to mate  
 With some great lady from the Imperial  
 Court,  
 Part tigress and all wanton. I care  
 not;  
 Or if the scheme miscarry, I care  
 not.  
 Tell me, good father.

*King.* Wouldst thou wed, Asander,  
 If 'twere to save the State, a Greek  
 from Cherson?

*Asan.* From Cherson? Nay, my  
 liege; that were too much.  
 A girl from out that cockatrice's den—  
 Take such a one to wife? I would  
 liefer take  
 A viper to my breast! Nay, nay, you  
 jest,  
 My father, for you hate this low-born  
 crew,  
 Grown gross by huckstering ways and  
 sordid craft—  
 Ay, more than I.

*King.* It is no jest, my son.  
 Our good Lysimachus will tell thee all  
 Our need and whence it comes.

*Lys.* My gracious Prince,  
 Thus stands the case, no otherwise.  
 Our foes

Press closer year by year, our wide-  
 spread plains

Are ravaged, and our bare, unpeopled  
 fields

Breed scantier levies; while the trea-  
 sury

Stands empty, and we have not means  
 to buy

The force that might resist them.  
 Nought but ruin,

Speedy, inevitable, can await  
 Our failing Bosphorus' unaided strength,  
 Unless some potent rich ally should  
 join

Our weakness to her might. None  
 other is there

To which to look but Cherson; and I  
 know,

From trusty friends among them, that  
 even now,

Perchance this very day, an embassy  
 Comes to us with design that we should  
 sink

Our old traditional hate in the new  
 bonds

Which Hymen binds together. For  
 the girl

Gycia, the daughter of old Lamachus,  
 Their foremost man, there comes but  
 one report—

That she is fair as good.

*Asan.* My lord, I pray you,  
 Waste not good breath. If I must sell  
 myself,

It matters not if she be fair or foul,  
 Angel or doubly damned; hating the  
 race,

Men, maidens, young and old, I would  
blight my life

To save my country.

*King.* Thanks, my dearest son.  
There spake a patriot indeed.

*Servant.* My liege,  
An embassy from Cherson for the King.

*Enter Ambassador, with retinue.*

*Ambas.* Sirs, I bring you a message  
from Lamachus, the Archon of Cher-  
son.

*Lys.* Sirs, forsooth! Know ye not  
the dignity of princes, or does your  
republican rudeness bar you from all  
courtesy? I do not count myself equal  
to the King, nor, therefore should you.

*King.* Nay, good Lysimachus, let  
him proceed.

*Ambas.* If I am blunt of speech, I  
beg your forgiveness. I bring to you  
a letter from the citizen Lamachus,  
which I shall read, if it be your  
pleasure.

*King.* Read on.

*Ambas.* "To the King of Bosphorus,  
Lamachus sends greeting. We are  
both old. Let us forget the former  
enmities of our States, and make an  
alliance which shall protect us against  
the storm of barbarian invasion which  
Cæsar is too weak to ward off. Thou  
hast a son, and I a daughter. Thy son  
is, from all report, a brave youth and  
worthy. My daughter is the paragon  
of her sex. I have wealth and posses-  
sions and respect as great as if I were a  
accepted King. The youth and the  
maid are of fitting age. Let us join  
their hands together, and with them  
those of our States, and grow strong  
enough to defy the barbarians, and  
Rome also."

*Asan.* My liege, I am willing for  
this marriage. Let it be.

*King.* My son, we have not yet  
heard all. Read on, sir.

*Ambas.* "There is one condition  
which not my will, but the jealousy of  
our people enforces, viz. that the Prince  
Asander, if he weds my daughter, shall  
thenceforth forswear his country, nor  
seek to return to it on pain of death.  
I pray thee, pardon the rudeness of my  
countrymen; but they are Greeks, and  
judge their freedom more than their  
lives."

*Asan.* Insolent hounds!  
This is too much. I will have none of  
them.

Take back that message.

*King.* Thou art right, my son.  
I could not bear to lose thee, not to  
win

A thousand Chersons. Let us fight  
alone,

And see what fortune sends us.

*Lys.* Good my liege,  
Be not too hasty. (*To Ambassador*)  
Sir, the King has heard  
The message which you bring, and  
presently

Will send a fitting answer. [*Exit Am-  
bassador.*]

Nay, my liege,  
I beg your patience. That these fellows  
make

Their friendship difficult is true; but  
think

How great the value of it, and re-  
member

How easy 'tis to promise and break  
faith

With insolent dogs like these. This  
Lamachus

Is older than your grace, and feebler far.

He will not live for ever, and, he gone,  
Will not the Prince Asander be as  
great,  
The husband of his daughter and his  
heir,  
As *he* is now, and sway the power of  
Cherson  
For our own ends, and cast to all the  
winds  
This foul enforced compact, and o'er-  
turn  
This commonwealth of curs? I will  
stake my life  
That three years shall not pass ere he  
is King  
Of Cherson in possession, and at once  
Of Bosphorus next heir.  
"The tongue hath sworn, the mind  
remains unsworn,"

So says their poet.

*Asan.* I'll have none of it.  
I am not all Greek, but part Cimmerian,  
And scorn to break my word.'

Let us face ruin, father, not deceit.

*King.* My noble son, I love thee.

*Lys.* Good, my liege,  
And thou, my Lord Asander, ponder  
it.

Consider our poor country's gaping  
wounds,

And what a remedy lies to our hands.

I will die willingly if I devise not

A scheme to bend these upstarts to  
your will. *[Exeunt omnes.]*

## SCENE II.—OUTSIDE THE PALACE.

MEGACLES and Courtiers.

*Meg.* Well, my lords, and so it is  
all settled. We must all be on board  
in half an hour. His Altitude the  
Prince sails at once for Cherson, and

with a view to his immediate marriage.  
Was ever such a rash step heard of?  
Not twenty-four hours to get ready the  
marriage equipment of a Prince of Bos-  
phorus. Well, well, I dare say they  
would be glad enough to take him with  
no rag to his back. I dare say these  
rascally republicans would know no  
better if he were to be married in his  
everyday suit.

*1st Court.* I' faith, I should never  
have dreamt it. Asander, who is the  
boldest huntsman and the bravest  
soldier, and the best of good fellows,  
to go and tie himself to the apron-  
string of a Greek girl, a tradesman's  
daughter from Cherson, of all places on  
earth! Pah! it makes me sick!

*2nd Court.* But I hear she is beauti-  
ful as Artemis, and—— Well, we are  
all young or have been, and beauty is  
a strong loadstone to such metal as the  
Prince's.

*3rd Court.* Nay, he has never set  
eyes on her; and, for that matter, the  
Lady Irene was handsome enough, in  
all conscience, and a jovial young  
gentlewoman to boot. Ye gods! do  
you mind how she sighed for him and  
pursued him? It was a sight to please  
the goddess Aphrodite herself. But  
then, our good Asander, who had only  
to lift up his little finger, was so cold  
and positively forbidding, that I once  
came upon the poor lady crying her  
eyes out in a passion of mortified  
feeling.

*1st Court.* Ay, she was from this  
outlandish Cherson, was not she?  
Aphrodite was a Greek woman also,  
remember.

*2nd Court.* So she was. I had  
quite forgotten where the lady came

from. Well, if she is there now, and cannot get her Prince, and would like a gay, tolerably well-favoured young fellow for a lover, I suppose she need go no further than the present company.

*Meg.* My lords, I pray you leave these frivolities, and let us come to serious matters. Think, I beg you, in what a painful position I am placed. I am to go, without proper notice, as Master of the Ceremonies of the Court of Bosphorus, to conduct an important Court-ceremonial with a pack of scurvy knaves, who, I will be bound, hardly know the difference between an Illustrious and a Respectable, or a Respectable and an Honourable. I must do my best to arrange all decently and in order, and as near as may be to the Imperial model, and all these matters I have to devise on shipboard, tossed about on that villanous Euxine, with a smell of pitch everywhere, and sea-sickness in my stomach. And when I get to Cherson, if ever I do get there alive, I have not the faintest idea whom I am to consult with—whether there is a Count of the Palace or anybody, in fact. I dare say there is nobody; I am sure there is nobody. A marriage of the heir apparent is a very serious affair, let me tell you. What a comfort it is that I have got the last edition of that precious work of the divine Theodosius on Dignities! If it were not for that, I should go mad.

*1st Court.* My good Megacles, I warn you the Prince cares as little for etiquette as he does for love-making.

*Meg.* Very likely, and that makes my position so difficult. Just reflect for a moment. When we go ashore at

Cherson, I suppose we shall be received by the authorities?

*2nd Court.* Surely, good Megacles.

*Meg.* Then, how many steps should Prince Asander take to meet his father-in-law Lamachus—eh? And how many steps should Lamachus take? You never gave the matter a thought? Of course not. And these are questions to be settled on the spot, and scores like them.

*3rd Court.* I dare say it won't matter at all, or very little.

*Meg.* Matter very little, indeed! very little, forsooth! Why, in the name of all the saints, do not alliances fall through for less? Are not bloody wars fought for less? Do I not remember the sad plight of the Grand Chamberlain, when the Illustrious Leo, the Pro-Consul of Macedonia, had a meeting at Court with the Respectable the Vice-Prefect of Pannonia? Now, the Pro-Consul should have taken four steps forward, as being the most noble, the Vice-Prefect five. But, the Vice-Prefect being a tall man, and the Pro-Consul a short one; the Grand Chamberlain did not sufficiently measure their distances; and so when they had taken but four steps each, there were the two Dignitaries bolt upright, face to face, glaring at each other, and no room to take the fraction of a foot pace more.

*1st Court.* Faith, a very laughable situation, good Megacles. Was it hard to settle!

*Meg.* I should think it was hard to settle. No one could interfere; the Book of Ceremonies was sent for, and was silent. There was nothing for it but that the Emperor, after half an



hour, broke up the Court in confusion, and those two remained where they were till it was quite dark, and then they got away, no one knows how. But what came of it? For fifteen years there was war and bloodshed between the provinces, and but for the invasion of the Goths, there would be to this day. Matter little, indeed! Why, you foolish youngster, ceremony is everything in life. To understand Precedence aright is to know the secrets of nature. The order of Precedence is the order of Creation. It is, in fact, a very cosmogony. Oh, a noble science! a noble science!

*1st Court.* Right, good Megacles, to magnify your office. Bravery is nothing; goodness is nothing; beauty is a foolish dream. Give us Ceremony, Ceremony, more Ceremony; it is the salt of life.

*Meg.* A very intelligent youth. But here comes the King.

*Enter the KING, ASANDER, and  
LYSIMACHUS.*

*Asan.* My liege, I do your will, Though with a heavy heart. Farewell, my father.

If I must bid farewell to this dear City, Which nourished me from childhood, 'tis to save it,

Not otherwise, and thou my sire and King.

From thee I do not part, and oftentimes,

If the saints will, I yet shall welcome thee,

When all our foes are routed and our troubles

Fled like some passing storm-cloud, to my hearth.

And set thy heir upon thy knees, a Prince

Of Bosphorus and Cherson.

*King.* Good, my son, I pray God keep you, for I dimly fear,

So dark a presage doth obscure my mind,

That we shall meet no more.

*Lys.* My honoured liege, These are the figments of a mind which grief

Hath part disordered. Thou shalt see thy son,

Trust me for it; I swear it. One thing more

Remains. I know what 'tis to be a youth

As yet untouched by love; I know what charm

Lies in the magic of a woman's eyes For a young virgin heart. I pray you, sir,

Swear to me by the saints, that, come what may,

For no allurements which thy new life brings thee,

The love of wife or child, wilt thou forget

Our Bosphorus, but still wilt hold her weal

Above all other objects of thy love In good or adverse fortune.

*Asan.* Nay, my lord, There is no need for oaths; yet will I swear it,

Here on this soldier's cross.

[*Makes a cross with the hilt of his sword.*

Farewell, my father, I mar my manhood, staying.

*King.* Farewell, son. Let my old eyes fix on thee till thou goest

Beneath the farthest verge. Good  
 Megacles,  
 And you brave gentlemen, be faithful  
 all  
 To me and to your Prince.  
*Lys.* My Lord Asander,  
 Remember!

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—LAMACHUS' PALACE,  
 CHERSON.

GYCIA and IRENE.

*Gycia.* Sweetest Irene,  
 What joy it is to see thee once again  
 After so long an absence! We had  
 grown  
 Together on one stalk so long, since  
 first  
 Our girlish lives began to burst to  
 flower,  
 That it was hard to part us. But me-  
 thinks  
 That something of the rose from off  
 thy cheek  
 Has faded, and its rounded outline fair  
 Seems grown a little thinner.

*Ire.* *Gycia,*  
 The flower, once severed from the  
 stalk, no more  
 Grows as before.

*Gycia.* Thou strange girl, to put on  
 Such grave airs! Ah! I fear at Bos-  
 phorus  
 Some gay knight has bewitched thee;  
 thou has fallen  
 In love, as girls say—though what it  
 may be  
 To fall in love, I know not, thank the  
 gods,  
 Having much else to think of.

*Ire.* Prithce, dear,  
 Speak not of this.

*Gycia.* Ah! then I know 'tis true.  
 Confess what manner of thing love is.

*Ire.* Nay, nay, I cannot tell thee  
 (*weeping*), *Gycia*;

Thou knowest not what thou askest.  
 What is love?

Seek not to know it. 'Tis to be no  
 more

Thy own, but all another's; 'tis to  
 dwell

By day and night on one fixed madding  
 thought,

Till the form wastes, and with the form  
 the heart

Is warped from right to wrong, and can  
 forget

All that it loved before, faith, duty,  
 country,

Friendship, affection—everything but  
 love.

Seek not to know it, dear; or, knowing  
 it,

Be happier than I.

*Gycia.* My poor Irene!  
 Then, 'tis indeed a misery to love.  
 I do repent that I have tortured thee  
 By such unthinking jests. Forgive me,  
 dear,

I will speak no more of it; with me  
 thy secret

Is safe as with a sister. Shouldst thou  
 wish

To unburden to me thy unhappy heart,  
 If haply I might bring thy love to thee.

Thou shalt his name divulge and  
 quality,

And I will do my best.

*Ire.* Never, dear *Gycia*.  
 Forget my weakness; 'twas a passing  
 folly,

I love a man who loves me not again,

And that is very hell. I would die  
 sooner  
 Than breathe his name to thee. Fare-  
 well, dear lady !  
 Thou canst not aid me. [*Exit IRENE.*  
*Gycia.* Hapless girl ! Praise  
 Heaven  
 That I am fancy-free !

*Enter LAMACHUS.*

*Lama.* My dearest daughter, why  
 this solemn aspect ?  
 I have glad news for thee. Thou  
 knowest of old  
 The weary jealousies, the bloody  
 feuds,  
 Which 'twixt our Cherson and her  
 neighbour City  
 Have raged ere I was born—nay, ere  
 my grandsire  
 First saw the light of heaven. Both  
 our States  
 Are crippled by this brainless enmity.  
 And now the Empire, now the Scythian,  
 threatens  
 Destruction to our Cities, whom,  
 united,  
 We might defy with scorn. Seeing  
 this weakness,  
 Thy father, wishful, ere his race be  
 run,  
 To save our much-loved Cherson, sent  
 of late  
 Politic envoys to our former foe,  
 And now—I' faith, I am not so old,  
 'twould seem  
 That I have lost my state-craft—comes  
 a message.  
 The Prince Asander, heir of Bos-  
 phorus,  
 Touches our shores to-day, and pre-  
 sently  
 Will be with us.

*Gycia.* Oh, father, is it wise ?  
 Do fire and water mingle ? Does the  
 hawk  
 Mate with the dove ; the tiger with the  
 lamb ;  
 The tyrant with the peaceful common-  
 wealth ;  
 Fair commerce with the unfruitful  
 works of war ?  
 What union can there be 'twixt our fair  
 city  
 And this half-barbarous race ? 'Twere  
 against nature  
 To bid these opposite elements com-  
 bine —  
 The Greek with the Cimmerian. Fa-  
 ther, pray you,  
 Send them away, with honour if you  
 please,  
 And soothing words and gifts—only, I  
 pray you,  
 Send them away, this Prince who doth  
 despise us,  
 And his false retinue of slaves.

*Lama.* My daughter,  
 Thy words are wanting in thy wonted  
 love  
 And dutiful observance. 'Twere an  
 insult  
 Unwashed by streams of bloodshed,  
 should our City  
 Scorn thus the guests it summoned.  
 Come they must,  
 And with all hospitable care and  
 honour,  
 Else were thy sire dishonoured. Thou  
 wilt give them  
 A fitting welcome.

*Gycia.* Pardon me, my father,  
 That I spoke rashly. I obey thy will.

[*Going.*

*Lama.* Stay, Gycia. Dost thou  
 know what 'tis to love ?

*Gycia.* Ay, thee, dear father.

*Lama.* Nay, I know it well.  
But has no noble youth e'er touched  
thy heart?

*Gycia.* None, father, Heaven be  
praised! The young Irene  
Was with me when thou cam'st, and  
all her life  
Seems blighted by this curse of love—  
for one

Whose name she hides, with whom in  
Bosphorus

She met, when there she sojourned.  
Her young brother,

The noble Theodorus, whom thou  
knowest,

Lets all the world go by him and grows  
pale

For love, and pines, and wherefore?—  
For thy daughter,

Who knows not what love means, and  
cannot brook

Such brain-sick folly. Nay, be sure,  
good father,

I love not thus, and shall not.

*Lama.* Well, well, girl,  
Thou wilt know it yet. I fetter not  
thy choice,

But if thou couldst by loving bind  
together

Not two hearts only, but opposing  
peoples;

Supplant by halcyon days long years of  
strife,

And link them in unbroken harmony;—  
Were this no glory for a woman, this  
No worthy price of her heart?

*Gycia.* Tell me, I pray,  
What mean you by this riddle?

*Lama.* Prince Asander  
Comes here to ask your hand, and with  
it take

A gracious dower of peace and amity.

He does not ask thee to forsake thy  
home,

But leaves for thee his own. All tongues  
together

Are full of praise of him: virgin in love,  
A brave youth in the field, as we have  
proved

In many a mortal fight; a face and form  
Like a young god's. I would, my love,  
thy heart

Might turn to him, and find thy happi-  
ness

In that which makes me happy. I am  
old

And failing, and I fain would see thee  
blest

Before I die, and at thy knees an heir  
To all my riches, and the State of  
Cherson

From anxious cares delivered, and  
through thee.

*Gycia.* Father, we are of the Athe-  
nian race,

Which was the flower of Hellas. Ours  
the fame

Of Poets, Statesmen, Orators, whose  
works

And thoughts upon the forehead of  
mankind

Shine like a precious jewel; ours the  
glory

Of those great Soldiers who by sea and  
land

Scattered the foemen to the winds of  
heaven,

First in the files of time. And though  
our mother,

Our Athens, sank, crushed by the might  
of Rome,

What is Rome now?—An Empire rent  
in twain;

An Empire sinking 'neath the unwieldy  
weight

Of its own power ; an Empire where  
 the Senate  
 Ranks lower than the Circus, and a  
 wanton  
 Degrades the Imperial throne. But  
 though to its fall  
 The monster totters, this our Cherson  
 keeps  
 The bravery of old, and still maintains  
 The old Hellenic spirit and some  
 likeness  
 Of the fair Commonwealth which ruled  
 the world.  
 Surely, my father, 'tis a glorious spring  
 Drawn from the heaven-kissed summits  
 whence we come ;  
 And shall we, then, defile our noble  
 blood  
 By mixture with this upstart tyranny  
 Which fouls the Hellenic pureness of  
 its source  
 In countless bastard channels? If our  
 State  
 Ask of its children sacrifice, 'tis well.  
 It shall be given ; only I prithee,  
 father,  
 Seek not that I should with barbaric  
 blood  
 Taint the pure stream, which flows  
 from Pericles.  
 Let me abide unwedded, if I may,  
 A Greek girl as before.  
*Lama.* Daughter, thy choice  
 Is free as air to accept or to reject  
 This suitor ; only, in the name of  
 Cherson,  
 Do nothing rashly, and meanwhile take  
 care  
 That nought that fits a Grecian State  
 be wanting  
 To do him honour.

*Gycia.* Sir, it shall be done.

SCENE II.—OUTSIDE THE PALACE  
 OF IAMACHUS.

MEGACLES and COURTIER.

*Meg.* Well, my lords, and so this is  
 the palace. A grand palace, forsooth,  
 and a fine reception to match ! Why,  
 these people are worse than barbarians.  
 They are worse than the sea, and that  
 was inhospitable enough. The saints  
 be praised that that is over, at any rate.  
 Oh, the intolerable scent of pitch, and  
 the tossing and the heaving ! Heaven  
 spare me such an ordeal again ! I  
 thought I should have died of the  
 smells. And here, can it be ? Is it  
 possible that there is a distinct odour  
 of—pah ! what ? Oils, as I am a  
 Christian, and close to the very palace  
 of the Archon ! What a detestable  
 people ! Some civet, good friends,  
 some civet !

*1st Court.* Here it is, good Mega-  
 cles. You did not hope, surely, to find  
 republicans as sweet as those who live  
 cleanly under a King ? But here are  
 some of their precious citizens at last.

*Enter CITIZENS hurriedly.*

*1st Citizen.* I pray you, forgive us,  
 gentlemen. We thought the Prince  
 would take the land at the other quay,  
 and had prepared our welcome accord-  
 ingly.

*Meg.* Who are these men ?

*1st Court.* They are honourable  
 citizens of Cherson.

*Meg.* Citizens ! They will not do  
 for me. The Count of the Palace  
 should be here with the Grand Cham-  
 berlain to meet my Master.

*1st Cit.* Your Master ? Oh ! then  
 you are a serving man, as it would

seem. Well, my good man, when comes your Master?

*Meg.* Oh, the impertinent scoundrel! Do you know, sir, who I am?

*1st Cit.* Probably the Prince's attendant, his lackey, or possibly his steward. I neither know nor care.

*Meg.* Oh, you barbarian! Where is the Count of the Palace, I say?

*1st Cit.* Now, citizen, cease this nonsense. We have not, thank Heaven, any such foolish effeminate functionary.

*Meg.* No Count of the Palace? Heavens! what a crew! Well, if there is none, where are your leading nobles? where the Respectable and Illustrious? You are certainly not Illustrious nor Respectable; you probably are not even Honourable, or if you are you don't look it.

*1st Cit.* What, you wretched popinjay of a serving man! You dare address a Greek citizen in that way? Take that, and that! [*Beats him.*]

*1st Court.* Draw, gentlemen! These are ruffians! [*They fight.*]

*Enter ASANDER.*

*Asan.\** Put up your swords, gentlemen. Why, fellows, what is this? Is this your hospitality to your guests?

*1st Cit.* Nay, sir; but this servant of yours has been most-insolent, and has abused and insulted our State and its manners. He told us that we were not men of honour; and some of us, sir, are young, and have hot blood, and, as Greek citizens of Cherson, will not bear insults.

*Asan.* Insolent upstarts, you are not worthy of our swords! Come, my Lord Megacles, heed them not. Here is their master.

*Enter LAMACHUS and Senators.*

*Lama.* We bid you heartfelt welcome, Prince, to Cherson.

That we have seemed to fail to do you honour

Comes of the spite of fortune. For your highness,

Taking the land at the entrance of the port,

Missed what of scanty pomp our homely manners

Would fain have offered; but we pray you think

'Twas an untoward accident, no more. Welcome to Cherson, Prince!

*Asan.* Methinks, my lord, Scarce in the meanest State is it the custom

To ask the presence of a noble guest With much insistence, and when he accepts

The summons, and has come, to set on him With insolent dogs like these.

*Lama.* Nay, Prince, I pray you, What is it that has been?

*Asan.* Our chamberlain Was lately, in your absence, which your highness

So glibly doth excuse, set on and beaten By these dogs here.

*Lama.* Nay, sir, they are not dogs, But citizens of honour; yet indeed Wanting, I fear, in that deep courtesy Which from a stranger and a guest refuses

To take provoked offence. My lord, indeed

I am ashamed that citizens of Cherson Should act so mean a part. Come, Prince, I pray you

Forget this matter, and be sure your coming

Fills me with joy. Go, tell the Lady  
Gycia  
The Prince is safe in Cherson.

*Enter GYCIA, IRENE, MELISSA, and  
Ladies. IRENE, seeing ASANDER,  
faints, and is withdrawn, GYCIA  
supporting her. Confusion.*

*Meg.* My Lord Asander, remember  
what is due to yourself and Bosphorus.  
Remember, when this merchant's  
daughter comes, you *must* not treat her  
as an equal. Courtesy to a woman is  
all very well, but rank has greater  
claims still, especially when you have  
to deal with such people as these.  
Now, remember, you must make *no*  
obscisance at all; and if you advance to  
meet her more than one step, you are  
lost for ever. These are the truly  
important things.

*Asan.* Good Megacles,  
Forewarned I am forwarned.

*(Aside)* Thou fluent trickster!  
Fit head of such a State! I would to  
Heaven  
I had never come!

*Re-enter GYCIA.*

Nay, nay, I thank the saints  
That I have come. Who is this peer-  
less creature?

Is this the old man's daughter?

*Lama.* Prince Asander,  
This is my daughter, Gycia. Of the  
prince  
Thou hast heard many a time, my  
daughter.

*Gycia (confused).* Ay!—  
Indeed I—

*Lama.* Come, my girl, thou art  
not used  
To fail of words.

*Asan.* Nay, sir, I pray you press  
her not to speak.

And yet I fain would hear her. Artemis  
Showed not so fair, nor with a softer  
charm

Came Hebe's voice.

*Gycia.* Nay, sir, I did not know  
A soldier could thus use a courtier's  
tongue.

*Asan.* If being bred in courts would  
give me power  
To put my thought in words, then would  
I fain

Be courtier for thy sake.

*Gycia.* Ah, sir, you jest.  
The ways of courts we know not, but I  
bid thee

Good welcome to our city, and I prithee  
Command whatever service our poor  
Cherson

Can give whilst thou art here. *(To*  
*MEGACLES)* Pray you my lord,  
Accompany his Highness and our house-  
hold

To the poor chambers which our homely  
state

Allots for him. They are but poor,  
I know,

For one who lives the stately life of  
kings;

But such as our scant means can reach  
they are.

*Meg.* My lady, I have lived long  
time in courts,

But never, in the palaces of Rome,  
Have I seen beauty such as yours, or  
grace

More worthy of a crown. *(To MELISSA)*  
To you, my lady,

I bow with most respectful homage.  
Surely

The goddess Heré has not left the  
earth

While you are here. I humbly take  
my leave  
For the present of your Highness with  
a thousand  
Obeisances, and to your gracious father  
Humbly I bend the knee. My Lord  
Asander,  
I do attend your Highness.

*Mel.* What a man!  
What noble manners! What a polished  
air!

How poor to such a courtier our rude  
Court  
And humble manners show!

*Asan.* Good Megacles,  
Get me to my chamber—quick, ere I  
o'erpass

All reasonable limits. I am sped;  
I am myself no more.

*Lama.* Farewell awhile.  
We will welcome you at supper.

[*Exeunt all but LAMACHUS and  
GYCIA.*]

*Lama.* Well, my daughter,  
What think you of this hot-brained  
youth? I' faith,  
I like his soldier's bluntness, and he  
seemed  
To be a little startled, as I thought,  
By something which he saw when thou  
didst come.

Perchance it was the charm of one who  
came

Among thy ladies took him.

*Gycia.* Nay, my father,  
I think not so indeed.

*Lama.* Ah! well, I am old,  
And age forgets. But this I tell thee,  
daughter:

If in my youth I had seen a young  
man's gaze

Grow troubled, and he should start,  
and his cheek pale,

A young girl drawing near, I had  
almost thought

Him suddenly in love.

*Gycia.* Oh, nay indeed!  
Who should be favoured thus? There  
is no woman

In our poor Cherson worthy that his  
gaze

Might rest on her a moment.

*Lama.* Ah, my girl,  
Is it thus with thee? They say that  
love is blind,

And thou art blind, therefore it may  
be, Gycia,

That thou too art in love. Tell me  
how it is.

Couldst thou love this man, if he loved  
thee?

*Gycia* (*throwing herself on her father's  
neck*). Father!

*Lama.* Say no more, girl. I am not  
so old as yet

That I have quite forgotten my own  
youth,

When I was young and loved; and if  
I err not,

I read love's fluttering signals on thy  
cheek,

And in his tell-tale eyes. But listen!  
Music!

We must prepare for supper with our  
guests.

### SCENE III.—A STREET IN CHERSON.

MEGACLES; afterwards MELISSA.

*Megacles.* Well, it is time for the  
banquet. Somehow, this place im-  
proves on acquaintance, after all. Poor,  
of course, and rude to a degree. But  
truly the Lady Gycia is fair—as fair,



indeed, as if she was the Emperor's daughter. She is a beautiful creature, truly. But give *me* that delightful lady-in-waiting of hers, the Lady Melissa. What grace! what rounded proportions! I like mature beauty. She is as like the late divine Empress as two peas, and I thought—I dare say I was wrong, but I really thought—I made an impression. Poor things! poor things! They can't help themselves. We courtiers really ought to be very careful not to abuse our power. It is positive cruelty. The contest is too unequal. It makes one inclined sometimes to put on the manners of a clown, so as to give them a chance. Nay, nay, you might as well ask the Ethiopian to change his skin as a courtier his fine manners. By all the saints! here she comes in *propria persona*.

*Enter the LADY MELISSA.*

*Mel.* Heavens! it is the strange nobleman. I am sure I am all of a flutter.

*Meg. (advancing with formal bows).* My lady, I am enchanted (*bows again; then takes several steps to the right, then to the left, and bows*). What a wonderful good fortune! Ever since I had the honour to see you just now, I have only lived in the hope of seeing you again.

*Mel. (curtsying).* Oh, my lord, you great courtiers can find little to interest you in our poor little Court and its humble surroundings.

*Meg.* Madam, I beg! not a word! I was just thinking that you exactly resembled the late divine Empress.

*Mel.* Oh, my lord, forbear! The Empress! and I have never been out

of Cherson! You flatter me, you flatter me, indeed. That is the way with all you courtiers from Constantinople. Now, if you had said that my Lady Gycia was beautiful——

*Meg.* My dear lady, I do not admire her in the least. She has no manners, really—nothing, at any rate, to attract a man of the great world; a mere undeveloped girl, with all the passion to come. No, no, my good lady, give me a woman who has lived. We courtiers know manners and breeding when we see them, and yours are simply perfect, not to say Imperial.

*Mel.* What a magnificent nature! Well, to say the truth, the Lady Gycia is not at all to my taste. It is a cold, insipid style of beauty, at the best; and she is as self-willed and as straitlaced as a lady abbess. I suppose she is well matched with the Prince Asander?

*Meg.* Well, he is a handsome lad enough, and virtuous, but weak, as youth always is, and pliable. Now, for myself, I am happy to say I am steadfast and firm as a rock.

*Mel.* Ah, my lord, if all women saw with my eyes, there would not be such a run after youth. Give me a mature man, who has seen the world and knows something of life and manners.

*Meg.* What an intelligent creature! Madam, your sentiments do you credit. I beg leave to lay at your feet the assurance of my entire devotion.

*Mel.* Oh, my lord, you are too good! Why, what a dear, condescending creature!—the manners of a Grand Chamberlain and the features of an Apollo!

*Meg.* Permit me to enrol myself among the ranks of your humble slaves and admirers (*kneels and kisses her*

*hand*). But hark! the music, and I must marshal the guests to the banquet.  
Permit me to marshal you.

*[Exeunt with measured steps.]*

SCENE IV.—THE GARDEN WITHOUT THE BANQUETING-ROOM. MOON-LIGHT. THE SEA IN THE DISTANCE, WITH THE HARBOUR.

ASANDER and GYCIA descend the steps of the palace slowly together. Music heard from within the hall.

*Asan.* Come, Gycia, let us take the soft sweet air  
Beneath the star of love. The festive lights  
Still burn within the hall, where late we twain  
Troth-plighted sate, and I from out thine eyes  
Drank long, deep draughts of love stronger than wine.  
And still the minstrels sound their dulcet strains,  
Which then I heard not, since my ears were filled  
With the sweet music of thy voice. My sweet,  
How blest it is, left thus alone with love,  
To hear the love-lorn nightingales complain  
Beneath the star-gemmed heavens, and drink cool airs  
Fresh from the summer sea! There sleeps the main  
Which once I crossed unwilling. Was it years since,  
In some old vanished life, or yesterday?  
When saw I last my father and the shores

Of Bosphorus? Was it days since, or years,

Tell me, thou fair enchantress, who hast wove

So strong a spell around me?

*Gycia.* Nay, my lord;

Tell thou me first what magic 'tis hath turned

A woman who had scoffed so long at love

Until to-day—to-day, whose blessed night

Is hung so thick with stars—to feel as I, That I have found the twin life which the gods

Retained when mine was fashioned, and must turn

To what so late was strange, as the flower turns

To the sun; ay, though he withers her, or clouds

Come 'twixt her and her light, turns still to him,

And only gazing lives.

*Asan.* Thou perfect woman!

And art thou, then, all mine? What have I done,

What have I been, that thus the favouring gods

And the consentient strength of hostile States

Conspire to make me happy? Ah! I fear,

Lest too great happiness be but a snare Set for our feet by Fate, to take us fast

And then despoil our lives.

*Gycia.* My love, fear not.

We have found each other, and no power has strength

To put our lives asunder.

*Asan.* Thou I seal

Our contract with a kiss. *[Kisses her.]*

*Gycia.* Oh, happiness!  
To love and to be loved! And yet  
methinks  
Love is not always thus. To some he  
brings  
Deep disappointment only, and the  
pain  
Of melancholy years. I have a lady  
Who loves, but is unloved. Poor soul!  
she lives  
A weary life. Some youth of Bosphorus  
Stole her poor heart.

*Asan.* Of Bosphorus saidst thou?  
And her name is?

*Gycia.* Irene. Didst thou know  
her?

*Asan.* Nay, love, or if I did I have  
forgot her.

*Gycia.* Poor soul! to-day when first  
we met, she saw  
Her lover 'midst thy train and swooned  
away.

*Asan.* Poor heart! This shall be  
seen to. Tell me, *Gycia*,  
Didst love me at first sight?

*Gycia.* Unreasonable,  
To bid me tell what well thou knowest  
already.

Thou know'st I did. And when did  
love take thee?

*Asan.* I was wrapt up in spleen and  
haughty pride,  
When, looking up, a great contentment  
took me,  
Shed from thy gracious eyes. Nought  
else I saw,  
Than thy dear self.

*Gycia.* And hadst thou ever loved?

*Asan.* Never, dear *Gycia*.  
I have been so rapt in warlike enter-  
prises  
Or in the nimble chase, all my youth  
long,

That never had I looked upon a  
woman

With thought of love before, though it  
may be

That some had thought of me, being a  
Prince

And heir of Bosphorus.

*Gycia.* Not for thyself;  
That could not be. Deceiver!

*Asan.* Nay, indeed!

*Gycia.* Oh, thou dear youth!

*Asan.* I weary for the day  
When we our mutual love shall crown  
with marriage.

*Gycia.* Not yet, my love, we are so  
happy now.

*Asan.* But happier then, dear  
*Gycia*.

*Gycia.* Nay, I know not  
If I could bear it and live. But hark,  
my love!

The music ceases, and the sated guests  
Will soon be sped. Thou must resume  
thy place

Of honour for a little. I must go,  
If my reluctant feet will bear me  
hence,

To dream of thee the livelong night.  
Farewell,

Farewell till morning. All the saints  
of heaven

Have thee in keeping!

*Asan.* Go not yet, my sweet;  
And yet I bid thee go. Upon thy lips  
I set love's seal, thus, thus.

[Kisses her. They embrace.  
Good night!

*Gycia.* Good night!  
[Exit GYCIA.

*Enter IRENE unperceived.*

*Asan.* Ah, sweetest, best of women!  
paragon

Of all thy sex, since first thy ancestress  
 Helen, the curse of cities and of men,  
 Marshall'd the hosts of Greece ! But  
     she brought discord ;  
 Thou, by thy all-compelling sweetness,  
     peace  
 And harmony for strife. What have  
     I done,  
 I a rough soldier, like a thousand others  
 Upon our widespread plains, to have  
     won this flower  
 Of womanhood—this jewel for the  
     front  
 Of knightly pride to wear, and, wear-  
     ing it,  
 Let all things else go by : To think  
     that I,  
 Fool that I was, only a few hours since,  
 Bemoan'd the lot which brought me  
     here and bade me  
 Leave my own land, which now sinks  
     fathoms deep  
 Beyond my memory's depths, and scarce  
     would deign  
 To obey thee, best of fathers, when thy  
     wisdom \*  
 Designed to make me blest ! Was ever  
     woman  
 So gracious and so comely ? And I  
     scorn'd her  
 For her Greek blood and love of  
     liberty !  
 Fool ! purblind fool ! there is no other  
     like her ;  
 I glory being her slave.

*Irene.* I pray you, pardon me, my  
 Lord Asander.

I seek the Lady Gycia ; is she here ?

*Asan.* No, madam ; she has gone,  
 and with her taken

The glory of the night. But thou dost  
 \* love her—

Is it not so, fair lady ?

*Ire.* Ay, my lord,  
 For we have lived together all our  
 lives ;

I could not choose but love.

*Asan.* Well said indeed.  
 Tell me, and have I seen thy face  
 before ?

A something in it haunts me.

*Ire.* Ay, my lord.  
 Am I forgot so soon ?

*Asan.* Indeed ! Thy name ?  
 Where have I seen thee ?

*Ire.* Where ? Dost thou, then, ask ?

*Asan.* Ay ; in good truth, my  
 treacherous memory

Betrays me here.

*Ire.* Thou mayest well forget  
 My name, if thou hast quite forgot its  
 owner. [*Heeps.*

I am called Irene.

*Asan.* Strange ! the very name  
 My lady did relate to me as hers  
 Who bears a hopeless love. Weep  
 not, good lady ;

Take comfort. Heaven is kind.

*Ire.* Nay, my good lord,  
 What comfort ? He I love loves not  
 again,

Or not me, but another.

*Asan.* Ah, poor lady !  
 I pity you indeed, now I have known  
 True recompense of love.

*Ire.* Dost thou say pity ?  
 And pity as they tell's akin to love.

What comfort is for me, my Lord  
 Asander,

Who love one so exalted in estate  
 That all return of honourable love  
 Were hopeless, as if I should dare to  
 raise

My eyes to Cæsar's self ? What  
 comfort have I,

If lately I have heard this man I love

Communing with his soul, when none  
 seemed near,  
 Betray a heart flung prostrate at the  
 feet  
 Of another, not myself; and well I  
 know  
 Not Lethe's waters can wash out  
 remembrance  
 Of that o'ermastering passion—naught  
 but death  
 Or hopeless depths of crime?

*Asan.* Lady, I pity  
 Thy case, and pray thy love may meet  
 return.

*Ire.* Then wilt thou be the suppliant  
 to thyself,  
 And willing love's requital, Oh, requite  
 it!

*Thou* art my love, Asander—thou,  
 none other.  
 There is naught I would not face, if I  
 might win thee.

That I a woman should lay bare my  
 soul;

Disclose the virgin secrets of my heart  
 To one who loves me not, and doth  
 despise

The service I would tender!

*Asan.* Cease, I pray you;  
 These are distempered words.

*Ire.* Nay, they are true,  
 And come from the inner heart. Leave  
 these strange shores

And her you love. I know her from a  
 child.

She is too high and cold for mortal  
 love:

Too wrapt in duty, and high thoughts  
 of State,

Artemis and Athene fused in one,  
 Ever to throw her life and maiden  
 shame

As I do at thy feet.

[*Kneels.*]

*Asan.* Rise, lady, rise;  
 I am not worthy such devotion.

*Ire.* Take me  
 Over seas; I care not where. I'll be  
 thy slave,

Thy sea-boy; follow thee, ill-housed,  
 disguised,

Through hardship and through peril, so  
 I see

Thy face sometimes, and hear some-  
 times thy voice,

For I am sick with love.

*Asan.* Lady, I prithee  
 Forget these wild words. I were less  
 than man

Should I remember them, or take the  
 gift

Which 'tis not reason offers. I knew  
 not

Thy passion nor its object, nor am free  
 To take it, for the vision of my soul  
 Has looked upon its sun, and turns no  
 more

To any lower light.

*Ire.* My Lord Asander,  
 She is not for thee; she cannot make  
 thee happy,

Nor thou her. Oh, believe me! I am  
 full

Of boding thoughts of the sure fatal  
 day

Which shall dissolve in blood the bonds  
 which love

To-day has plighted. If thou wilt not  
 take me,

Then get thee gone alone. I see  
 fire

Which burns more fierce than love, and  
 it consumes thee.

Fly with me, or alone, but fly.

*Asan.* Irene,  
 Passion distracts thy brain. I pray  
 you, seek

Some mutual love as I. My heart is  
fixed,  
And gone beyond recall. [Exit.

*Enter THEODORUS unseen.*

*Ire. (weeping passionately).* Dis-  
graced! betrayed!  
Rejected! All the madness of my  
love  
Flung back upon me, as one spurns a gift  
Who scorns the giver. That I love  
him still,  
And cannot hate her who has robbed  
me of him!  
I shall go mad with shame!

*Theo.* Great Heaven! sister,  
What words are these I hear? My  
father's daughter  
Confessing to her shame! [IRENE weeps  
Come, tell me, woman;  
I am thy brother and protector, tell  
me

What mean these words?

*Ire.* Nay, nay, I cannot, brother.  
They mean not what they seem, indeed  
they do not.

*Theo.* They mean not what they  
seem. Thou hast been long  
In Bosphorus, and oft-times at the Court  
Hast seen the Prince. When he to-day  
comes hither,

Thou swoonest at the sight. I, seek-  
ing thee,

Find thee at night alone, he having left  
thee,

Lamenting for thy shame. Wouldst  
have no credit

Thy innocence? Speak, if thou hast a  
word

To balance proofs like these, let thy  
silence

Condemn thee.

*Ire. (after a pause, and slowly, as if  
calculating consequences).* Then  
do I keep silence, brother,  
And let thy vengeance fall.

*Theo.* Oh, long-dead mother,  
Who now art with the saints, shut fast  
thy ears

Against thy daughter's shame! These  
are the things

That make it pain to live: all precious  
gifts,

Honour, observance, virtue, flung away  
For one overmastering passion. Why  
are we

Above the brute so far, if we keep still  
The weakness of the brute? Go from  
my sight,

Thou vile, degraded wretch. For him  
whose craft

And wickedness has wronged thee,  
this I swear--

I will kill him, if I can, or he shall  
me,

I will call on him to draw, and make  
my sword

Red with a villain's blood.

*Ire. (eagerly).* Nay, nay, my  
brother,

That would proclaim my shame; and  
shouldst thou slay him,

Thou wouldst break thy lady's heart.

*Theo.* Doth she so love him?

*Ire.* Ay, passionately, brother.

*Theo.* Oh, just Heaven!  
And oh, confused world!

How are we fettered here! I may not  
kill

A villain who has done my sister  
wrong,

Since she I love has given her heart to  
him,

And hangs upon his life. I would not  
pain

My Gycia with the smallest, feeblest pang

That wrings a childish heart, for all the world,

How, then, to kill her love, though killing him

Would rid the world of a villain, and would leave

My lady free to love? 'Twere, not love's part

To pain her thus, not for the wealth and power

Of all the world heaped up. I tell thee, sister,

Thy paramour is safe—I will not seek to do him hurt; but thou shalt go to-night

To my Bithynian castle. Haply thence, After long penances and seclude days,

Thou mayst return, and I may hear once more

To see my sister's face.

*Ira.* Farewell, my brother. I do obey; I bide occasion, waiting For what the years may bring.

*Theo.* Repent thy sin.

### ACT III.

SCENE I.—CHERSON, TWO YEARS AFTER. THE PALACE OF LAMACUS.

ASANDER and GYCIA.

*Gycia.* What day is this, Asander? Canst thou tell me?

*Asan.* Not I, my love. All days are now alike;

The weeks fleet by, the days equivalent gems

Strung on a golden thread.

*Gycia.* Thou careless darling! I did not ask thee of the calendar.

Dost think a merchant's daughter knows not that?

Nay, nay; I only asked thee if thou knewest

If aught upon this day had ever brought Some great change to thee.

*Asan.* Sweetest, dearest wife, Our marriage! Thinkest thou I should forget,

Ay, though the chills of age had froze my brain,

That day of all my life?

*Gycia.* Dost thou regret it? I think thou dost not, but 'tis sweet to hear

The avowal from thy lips?

*Asan.* Nay, never a moment. And thou?

*Gycia.* Nay, never for a passing thought.

I did not know what life was till I knew thee.

Dost thou remember it, how I came forth,

Looking incuriously to see the stranger, And lo! I spied my love, and could not murmur

A word of courtesy?

*Asan.* Dost thou remember How I, a feverish and hot-brained youth,

Full of rash pride and princely arrogance,

Lifted my eyes, and saw a goddess coming—

*Gycia.* Nay, a weak woman only.

*Asan.* And was tamed By the first glance?

*Gycia.* What are we lovers still, After two years of marriage?

*Asan.* Is it two years, Or twenty? By my faith, I know not which,

For happy lives glide on like seaward  
streams

Which keep their peaceful and un-  
ruffled course

So smoothly that the voyager hardly  
notes

The progress of the tide. Ay, two  
years 'tis,

And now it seems a day, now twenty  
years,

But always, always happy.

[Embraces GYCIA.]

*Gycia.* Yet, my love,  
We have known trials too. My  
honoured sire

Has gone and left us since.

*Asan.* Ay, he had reaped  
The harvest of his days, and fell asleep  
Amid the garnered sheaves.

*Gycia.* Dearest, I know  
He loved thee as a son, and always  
strove

To fit thee for the place within our  
State

Which one day should be thine. Some-  
times I think,

Since he has gone, I have been covetous  
Of thy dear love, and kept thee from  
the labour

Of Statecraft, and the daily manly  
toils

Which do befit thy age; and I have  
thought;

Viewing thee with the jealous eye of  
love,

That I have marked some shade of  
melancholy

Creep on when none else saw thee, and  
desired

If only I might share it.

*Asan.* Nay, my love,  
I have been happy truly, though some-  
times,

It may be, I have missed the clear, brisk  
air

Of the free plains; the trumpet-notes  
of war,

When far against the sky the glint  
of arms

Lit by the rising sun revealed the  
ranks

Of the opposing host, the thundering  
onset

Of fierce conflicting squadrons, and the  
advance

Of the victorious hosts. Oh for the  
vigour

And freshness of such life! But I  
have chosen

To sleep on beds of down, as Caesar  
might,

And live a woman's minion.

*Gycia.* Good my husband,  
Thou shouldst not speak thus. I would  
have thee win

Thy place in the Senate, rule our  
Cherson's fortunes,

Be what my father was without the  
name,

And gain that too in time.

*Asan.* What! You would have me  
Cozen, intrigue, and cheat, and play  
the huckster,

As your republicans, peace on their  
lips

And subtle scheming treaties, till the  
moment

When it is safe to spring? Would you  
have me cringe

To the ignorant mob of churls, through  
whose sweet voices

The road to greatness lies? Nay, nay;  
I am

A King's son, and of Bosphorus, not  
Cherson—

A Scythian more than Greek.



*Gycia.* Nay, my good lord,  
 Scythian or Greek, to me thou art more  
 dear  
 Than all the world beside. Yet will  
 not duty,  
 The memory of the dead, the love of  
 country,  
 The pride of the great race from which  
 we spring,  
 Suffer my silence wholly, hearing thee.  
 It is not true that men Athenian-born  
 Are of less courage, less of noble nature,  
 More crafty in design, less frank of  
 purpose,  
 Than are thy countrymen. They have  
 met and fought them,  
 Thou knowest with what fate. For  
 polity  
 I hold it better that self-governed men  
 Should, using freedom, but eschewing  
 license,  
 Fare to what chequered fate the will of  
 Heaven  
 Reserves for them, than shackled by  
 the chains  
 The wisest tyrant, gilding servitude  
 With seeming gains, imposes. We are  
 free  
 In speech, in council, in debate, in act,  
 As when our great Demosthenes hurled  
 back  
 Defiance to the tyrant. Nay, my lord,  
 Forgive my open speech. I have not  
 forgot  
 That we are one in heart and mind and  
 soul,  
 Knit in sweet bonds for ever. Put  
 from thee  
 This jaundiced humour.  
 If State-craft please not, by the head-  
 long chase  
 Which once I know thou lovedst. Do  
 not grudge

To leave me; for to-day my bosom  
 friend,

After two years of absence, comes to me.  
 I shall not feel alone, having Irene.

*Asan.* Whom dost thou say?  
 Irene?

*Gycia.* Yes, the same.  
 She was crossed in love, poor girl, dost  
 thou remember,

When we were wed?

*Asan.* Gycia, I mind it well.  
 Send her away—she is no companion  
 for thee;

She is not fit, I say.

*Gycia.* What is't thou sayest?  
 Thou canst know nought of her. Nay,  
 I remember,

When I did ask thee if thou knewest her  
 At Bosphorus, thou answeredst that  
 thou didst not.

*Asan.* I know her. She is no fit  
 mate for thee.

*Gycia.* Then, thou didst know her  
 when thy tongue denied it.

*Asan.* How 'tis I know her boots  
 not: I forbid  
 My wife to know that woman. Send  
 her hence.

*Gycia.* Nay, nay, my lord, it profits  
 not to quarrel.

Thou art not thyself. Either thou  
 knew'st her name

When we were wedded, or unreasoning  
 spleen,

Doth blind thy judgment since. Thou  
 canst not know her

Who has been absent.

*Asan.* Ask no more, good wife:  
 I give no reason.

*Gycia.* Nay, indeed, good husband,  
 Thou hast no reason, and without good  
 reason

I will not spurn my friend.

*Asan.* Gycia, forgive me ;  
I spoke but for our good, and I will  
tell thee  
One day what stirs within me, but to-  
day  
Let us not mar our happy memories  
By any shade of discord.

*Gycia.* Oh, my love,  
Forgive me if I have seemed, but for a  
moment,  
To fail in duty. I am all, all thine ;  
I have nought but thee to live for.  
Childish hands  
And baby voices lisping for their mother  
Are not for me, nor thee ; but, all in  
all,  
We joy together, we sorrow together,  
and last  
Shall die, when the hour comes, as  
something tells me,  
Both in the self-same hour.

*Asan.* Nay, wife, we are young ;  
Our time is not yet come. Let us  
speak now  
Of what I know thou holdest near thy  
heart.  
I do remember that it was thy wish  
To celebrate thy father's name and  
fame  
By some high festal. If thy purpose  
hold  
For such observance, the sad day which  
took him  
Returns a short time hence ; I will  
employ  
Whatever wealth is mine to do him  
honour,  
And thee, my Gycia. Honouring the  
sire,  
I honour too the child.

*Gycia.* My love, I thank thee  
For this spontaneous kindness, and I  
love thee ;

I am all thine own again. Come, let  
us go ;  
Nor spare the wealth wherewith his  
bounty blest us  
To do fit honour to the illustrious dead.  
[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II. -- THE SAME.

MELACHES, Courtiers ; afterwards  
ASANDER.

*Mel.* Well, my Lords, two years  
have pass'd since we left our Bosphorus,  
and I see no sign of our returning  
there. If it were not for that delight-  
ful Lady Melissa, whose humble slave  
I am always (*Courtiers laugh*), I would  
give all I am worth to turn my back  
upon this scurvy city and its republican  
crew. But my Lord Asander is so  
devoted to his fair lady--and, indeed, I  
can hardly wonder at it--that there  
seems no hope of our seeing the old  
shores again. I thought he would have  
been off long ago.

*1st Court.* A model husband the  
Prince, a paragon of virtue.

*2nd Court.* Well, there is no great  
merit in being faithful to a rich and  
beautiful woman. I think I could be  
as steady as a rock under the like con-  
ditions.

*3rd Court.* Well, mind ye, it is not  
every man who could treat the very  
marked overtures of the fair Lady  
Irene as he did. And he had not seen  
his wife then, either. No ; the man is  
a curious mixture, somewhat cold, and  
altogether constant, and that is not a  
bad combination to keep a man straight  
with the sex. Poor soul ! do you re-  
member how she pursued him at Bos-

phorus, and how she fainted away at the wedding? They say she is coming back speedily, in her right mind. She has been away ever since, no one knows where. That solemn brother of hers conveyed her away privily.

*1st Court.* I hate that fellow--a canting hypocrite, a solemn impostor!

*2nd Court.* So say we all. But mark you, if the Lady Irene comes back, there will be mischief before long. What news from Bosphorus, my Lord Megacles?

*Meg.* I have heard a rumour, my lord, that his Majesty the King is ailing.

*1st Court.* Nay, is he? Then there may be a new King and a new Queen, and we shall leave this dog-hole and live at home like gentlemen once more.

*3rd Court.* Then would his sacred Majesty's removal be a blessing in disguise.

*2nd Court.* Ay, indeed would it. Does the Prince know of it?

*Meg.* I have not told him aught, having, indeed, nothing certain to tell; but he soon will, if it be true. But here his Highness comes.

*Enter ASANDER.*

My Lord Asander, your Highness's humble servant welcomes you with effusion.

*[Bows low.]*

*Asan.* Well, my good Megacles, and you, my lords. There will be ample work for you all ere long. The Lady Gycin is projecting a great festival in memory of her father, and all that the wealth of Cherson can do to honour him will be done. There will be solemn processions, a banquet, and a people's holiday. Dost thou not spy some good ceremonial work there, my

good Megacles? Why, thou wilt be as happy as if thou wert at Byzantium itself, marshalling the processions, arranging the banquet, ushering in the guests in due precedence, the shipowner before the merchant, the merchant before the retailer. Why, what couldst thou want more, old Trusty? *[Laughs.]*

*Meg.* Ah, my Lord Prince, your Highness is young. When you are as old as I am, you will not scoff at Ceremony. This is the pleasantest day that I have spent since your Highness's wedding-day. I thank you greatly, and will do my best, your Highness.

*Asan.* That I am sure of, good Megacles. Good day, my lords, good day. *[Exit MEGACLES and Courtiers.]*

*Enter Messenger.*

*Mess.* My Lord Asander, a messenger from Bosphorus has just landed, bringing this letter for your Highness.

*Asan.* Let me see it. *[Reads.]* "Lysimachus to Asander sends greeting. Thy father is failing fast, and is always asking for his son. Thou art free, and must come to him before he dies. I have much to say to thee, having heard long since of a festival in memory of Lamachus to be held shortly. I will be with thee before then. Be ready to carry out the plan which I have formed for thy good, and will reveal to thee. Remember."

My father ailing?  
And asks for me, and I his only son  
Chained here inactive, while the old  
man pines  
In that great solitude which hems a  
throne,  
With none but hirelings round him.  
Dearest father,

I fear that sometimes in the happy years  
Which have come since, my wandering  
    regards,  
Fixed on one overmastering thought,  
    have failed  
To keep their wonted duty. If indeed  
This thing has been, I joy the time has  
    come  
When I may show my love. But I  
    forget !  
The fetters honour binds are adamant ;  
I am free no more. Nay, nay, there is  
    no bond  
Can bind a son who hears his father's  
    voice  
Call from a bed of pain. I must go  
    and will,  
Though all the world cry shame on my  
    di-honour ;  
And with me I will take my love, my  
    bride,  
To glad the old man's eyes. My mind  
    is fixed ;  
I cannot stay, I cannot rest, away  
From Bosphorus. (*Summons Messenger*)  
    Go, call the Lady Gycia.  
(*Resumes*) Ay, and my oath, I had for-  
    gotten it.  
I cannot bear to think what pitiless plot  
Lysimachus has woven for the feast.  
What it may be I know not, but I fear  
Some dark and dreadful deed. 'Twere  
    well enough  
For one who never knew the friendly  
    grasp  
Of hands that once were foemen's.  
    But for me,  
Who have lived among them, come and  
    gone with them,  
Trodden with them the daily paths of  
    life,  
Mixed in their pleasures, shared their  
    hopes and fears

For two long happy years, to turn and  
    doom  
Their city to ruin, and their wives and  
    children  
To the insolence of rapine? Nay, I  
    dare not.  
I will sail at once, and get me gone for  
    ever.  
I will not tell my love that I am bound  
By her father's jealous fancies to return  
To Bosphorus no more. To break my  
    oath !  
That were to break if only in the word,  
But keep it in the spirit. Surely Heaven  
For such an innocent perjury keeps no  
    pains.  
But here she comes.

*Enter GYCIA.*

*Gycia.* Didst send for me, my  
    lord ?

*Asan.* Gycia, the King is ill, and  
    asks for me ;

He is alone and weak.

*Gycia.* Then, fly to him  
At once, and I will follow thee. But  
    stay !

Is he in danger ?

*Asan.* Nay, not presently ;  
Only the increasing weight of years  
    o'ersets

His feeble sum of force.

*Gycia.* Keeps he his bed ?

*Asan.* Not yet as I have known.

*Gycia.* Well then, dear heart,  
We yet may be in time if we should  
    tarry

To celebrate the honours we have vowed  
To my dead father. This day sennight  
    brings

The day which saw him die.

*Asan.* Nay, nay, my sweet ;  
'Twere best we went at once.

*Gycia.* My lord, I honour  
 \* The love thou bearest him, but go I  
     cannot,  
 Until the feast is done. 'Twould cast  
     discredit  
 On every daughter's love for her dead  
     sire,  
 If I should leave this solemn festival  
 With all to do, and let the envious  
     crowd  
 Carp at the scant penurious courtesy  
 Of hireling honours by an absent  
     daughter  
 To her illustrious dead.

*Asan. (earnestly).* My love, 'twere  
     best  
 We both were far away.

*Gycia.* My lord is pleased  
 To speak in riddles, but till reason speaks  
 'Twere waste of time to listen.

*Asan.* Nay, my wife,  
 Such words become thee not, but to  
     obey  
 Is the best grace of woman. Were I  
     able, \*  
 I would tell thee all, I fear, for thee  
     and me,  
 But cannot.

*Gycia.* Then, love, thou canst go  
     alone,  
 And I must follow thee. The Archon  
     Zetho  
 Comes presently, to order what remains  
 To make the solemn festival do honour  
 To the blest memory of Lamachus.  
 Doubtless, he will devise some fitting  
     pretext  
 To excuse thy absence.

*Asan.* Nay, thou must not ask him ;  
 Breathe not a word, I pray.

*Gycia.* My good Asander,  
 What is it moves thee thus? See, here  
     he comes.

*Enter ZETHO and Senators.*

*Gycia.* Good morrow, my Lord  
     Zetho ! We were late,  
 Debating of the coming festival,  
 And how my lord the Prince, having  
     ill news  
 From Bosphorus, where the King his  
     sire lies sick,  
 Can bear no part in it.

*Zetho.* I grieve indeed  
 To hear this news, and trust that  
     Heaven may send  
 Swift comfort to his son, whom we ~~all~~  
     love.

*Asan.* I thank thee, Archon, for  
     thy courtesy ;  
 And may thy wish come true.

*Gycia.* And meantime, since my  
     husband's heart is sore  
 For his sire's loneliness, our pur-  
     pose is  
 That he should sail to-morrow and go  
     hence

To Bosphorus, where I, the festival  
 Being done, will join him later, and  
     devote

A daughter's loving care and tender  
     hand  
 To smooth the old man's sick-bed.

*Zetho.* Nay, my daughter,  
 I grieve this cannot be. The Prince  
     Asander,

Coming to Cherson only two years  
     gone,  
 Did pledge his solemn word to thy dead  
     father

That never would he seek, come foul  
     or fair,

To turn from Cherson homewards, and  
     I marvel

That never, in the years that since have  
     passed

Amid the close-knit bonds of wedded  
lives,  
He has revealed this secret. We who  
rule  
Our Cherson know through what blind  
shoals of fortune  
Our ship of state drives onward. And  
I dare not,  
Holding the rule which was thy father's  
once,  
Release him from the solemn pledge  
which keeps  
Our several States bound fast in amity,  
But each from the other separate, and  
each  
Free from the perils tangled intercourse  
Might breed for both. Indeed, it can-  
not be ;  
I grieve that so it is.

*Gycia.* My Lord Asander,  
Are these things so indeed ?

*Asan.* They are, my wife.  
A rash and heedless promise binds me  
fast,  
Which, in all frankness, I had never  
dreamt  
Could thus demand fulfilment. Who  
is there  
More loyal to the State than I ? Who  
is there  
Bound by such precious chains of love  
and faith  
As is thy husband ? If I said no word  
Of this before, it was that I would  
fain

Forget this hateful compact. Sir, I  
beg you

Let me go hence, and when the old  
man's sickness

Is done, as Heaven will have it, take  
my word

That I will be a citizen of Cherson  
Again, whate'er may come.

*Zetho.* If the King dies,  
Then art thou straightway King of  
Bosphorus,  
Knowing the strength and weakness of  
our State,  
And having bound to thee by closest  
friendship  
Our chiefest citizens. Nay, nay, I dare  
not

Relieve thee from the pledge.

*Asan.* Thou hoary trickster,  
Speakest thou thus to me ? [*Draws.*

*Gycia (interposing).* Great heavens !  
Asander,

Knowest thou what thou dost ? (*To*  
*ZETHO*) Pardon him, sir.

He is not himself, I think, but half  
distraught,

To bear himself thus madly.

*Zetho.* Daughter, the State  
Knows to protect itself from insolence  
And arrogant pride like this, and it is  
certain

'Twas a wise caution led thy honoured  
father

To stipulate that such ungoverned  
passion

Should be cut off from those conspiring  
forces

From which combined came danger.

*Asan.* *Gycia,*  
Hearest thou this schemer ? Dost thou  
know indeed

That I am prisoned here, while my  
loved father

Lies on the bed of death ? Dost thou  
distrust me,

That thou dost speak no word ?

*Gycia.* My lord, I cannot.  
The measure which my father's wisdom  
planned

For the safety of the State, I, a weak  
woman,

Am too infirm to judge. Thou didst  
 not tell me,  
 Asking that I should fly with thee, the  
 bonds  
 By which thy feet were fettered. Had  
 I known  
 I never had consented. Had I gone,  
 Breaking the solemn ordinance of State,  
 I should have left with thee my former  
 love,  
 And sailed back broken-hearted. That  
 thou grieveest  
 There is none knows as I, but oh, my  
 love!  
 Though it be hard to bear, yet is grief  
 lighter  
 Than broken vows, and blighted honour,  
 and laws  
 Made to sustain the State, yet upset  
 By one man's will. Dearest, we cannot  
 go—  
 Nor thou; the State forbids it. I will  
 pray  
 Thy father may grow strong again, and  
 sit  
 Here at our hearth a guest; but this is  
 certain—  
 To Bosphorus we go not. And I pray  
 you  
 Make to my lord, who fills my father's  
 place,  
 What reparation thy ungoverned rage  
 And hasty tongue demand.

*Asan.* Thou cold Greek woman!  
 Of this, then, 'twas they warned me  
 a smooth tongue  
 And a cold heart; a brain by logic  
 ruled,  
 And not at all by love. Thou hast no  
 pity,  
 For pity shapes not into syllogisms;  
 Nor can affection ape philosophy,  
 Nor natural love put on the formal robe

Of cold too-balanced State-craft. Hear  
 me, old man,  
 And thou too, wife. 'Twere better,  
 ay, far better,  
 That I should get me gone, and my  
 wife with me,  
 Than be pent here unwilling; but  
 were it better  
 Or were it worse, be sure I will not  
 stay  
 When duty calls me hence. Wife, wilt  
 thou come?

*Gycia.* My lord, I cannot.  
*Asan.* Then, I go alone.  
*Zetho.* Nay, thou shalt not. Ho  
 there! arrest the Prince.  
 [Guards arrest ASANDER.  
*Asan.* Unhand me. At your peril.  
 [Draves.  
*Gycia.* Oh, my husband! [Weeps.

SCENE III.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

IRENE; afterwards GYCIA.

*Ire.* What! am I mad, or does  
 some devilish power  
 Possess me heart and soul? I once  
 loved Gycia;  
 I love Asander with o'er-mastering love,  
 And yet these frequent rumours of dis-  
 sensions  
 Marring the smooth course of their  
 wedded life  
 Bring me a swift, fierce joy. If aught  
 befell  
 To separate those lovers, then might  
 Fate  
 And Chance open for me the golden  
 doors  
 That lead to Love's own shrine; and  
 yet I know not  
 If any power might melt to mutual love

That too-cold heart. But still, no other  
chance

Is left but this alone : if I should force  
Those loving souls apart, then 'twere  
my turn.

Am I a monster, then, to will this  
wrong?

Nay, but a lovesick woman only,  
willing

To dare all for her passion. Though I  
loathe

Those crooked ways, yet love, despite  
myself,

Drives me relentless onward.

*Enter GYCIA.*

Dearest lady,  
Why art thou thus cast down? Some  
lovers' quarrel,

To be interred with kisses?

*Gycia.* Nay, Irene,  
This is no lovers' quarrel.

*Ire.* Tell me, Gycia,  
What was the cause?

*Gycia.* The King of Bosphorus  
Is ailing, and desires to see his son,  
Who fain would go to him.

*Ire.* And thou refusedst  
To let thy lover go?

*[Laughs mockingly.]*

*Gycia.* Nay, 'twas not so ;  
But politic reasons of the State forbid  
The Prince's absence.

*Ire.* Well, whate'er the cause,  
The old man fain would see his son,  
and thou  
Deniedst.

*Gycia.* I denied him what the State  
Denied him, and no more.

*Ire.* The State denied him !  
What does it profit thee to be the  
daughter

Of Lamachus, if thou art fettered thus

In each wish of thy heart ? If it were I,  
And ~~the~~ my love, I would break all  
bonds that came

Between me and my love's desire.

*Gycia.* Irene,  
Thou know'st not what thou say'st.

*Ire.* It may be so ;  
I do not love by halves.

*Gycia.* I do not need  
That thou shouldst tutor me, who am  
so blest

In love's requital. I have nought to  
learn

From thee, who bearest unrequited love  
For one thou wilt not name.

*Ire.* Wouldst thou that I  
Should name him? Nay, it were best  
not, believe me,

For me and thee.

*Gycia.* Why, what were it to me,  
Thou luckless woman?

*Ire.* What were it to thee?  
More than thou knowest, much.

*Gycia.* And therefore 'tis  
That thou dost dare to tutor me to  
deal

With the man I love, my husband.

*Ire.* Gycia,  
Love is a tyrannous power, and brooks  
no rival

Beside his throne. Dost thou, then,  
love indeed,

Who art so filled with duty?

*Gycia.* Do I love?  
Ay, from the depths of my enamoured  
heart !

I am all his own to make or break at  
will.

Only my duty to the State my mother  
And the thrice-blessed memory of my  
sire

Forbids that I should sink my soul in  
his,



Or, loving, grow unworthy. But,  
indeed,  
Thou pleadest his cause as if thyself  
did love him.

*Ire.* As if I loved!—as if I

*Gycia.* Indeed, 'tis well  
Thou didst not, were he free, for he, it  
seems,  
Has known of thee, and speaks not  
kindly words.  
I know not wherefore.

*Ire.* Did he speak of me?

*Gycia.* Ay, that he did.

*Ire.* And what said he?

*Gycia.* I think  
'Twere best thou didst not know.

*Ire.* Tell me, I prithee;  
I can bear to hear.

*Gycia.* 'Twas but a hasty word,  
And best forgotten.

*Ire.* But I prithee tell me,  
What said he?

*Gycia.* That 'twere best I were  
alone  
Than commercing with thee, since thou  
wert not  
My fit companion.

*Ire.* Said he that, the coward?

*Gycia.* I am his wife, Irene.

*Ire.* What care I?  
I have loved this man too well, before  
he saw thee.  
There, thou hast now my secret. I  
have loved him,  
And he loved me, and left me, and  
betrayed me.  
Was it for him to brand me with this  
stain?  
Unfit for thy companion! If I  
be,  
Whose fault is that but his, who found  
me pure  
And left me what I am?

*Gycia.* What! dost thou dare  
Malign my husband thus? I have  
known his life  
From his own lips, and heard no word  
of thee.

*Ire.* He did confess he knew me.

*Gycia.* Ay, indeed,  
Not that he did thee wrong.

*Ire.* My Lady Gycia,  
Did ever man confess he wronged a  
woman?

If thou believe not me, who am indeed  
Disgraced, and by his fault, thou once  
didst love

My brother Theodorus—send for him.  
He is without, and waits me. Ask of  
him,

Who has long known my secret.

*Gycia.* I will ask him.  
Thou wretched woman, since thou art  
polluted,  
Whate'er my love may be, go from my  
sight,  
And send thy brother. Then betake  
thyself

To a close prison in the haunted Tower,  
Till I shall free thee. Out of my sight,  
I say,

Thou wanton! [*Exit* IRENE.]

What have I done, how have I sinned,  
that Heaven  
Tortures me thus? How can I doubt  
this creature

Speaks something of the truth? Did he  
not say

At first he never knew that wanton's  
name?

Did he not afterwards betray such  
knowledge

Of her and of her life as showed the  
lie

His former words concealed? And yet  
how doubt

My dear, who by two years of wedded  
love

Has knit my soul to his? I know how  
lightly

The world holds manly virtue, but I  
hold

The laws of honour are not made to bind  
Half of the race alone, leaving men  
licensed

To break them when they will; but  
dread decrees

Binding on all our kind. But oh, my  
love,

I will not doubt thee, till conviction  
bring

Proofs that I dare not doubt!

*Enter THEODORUS.*

*Theo.* My Lady Gycia,  
I come at thy command.

*Gycia.* Good Theodorus,  
Thou lovedst me once, I think?

*Theo.* I loved thee *once*!  
Oh, heaven!

*Gycia.* I am in great perplexity  
And sorrow, and I call upon thy  
friendship

To succour me, by frank and free  
confession

Of all thou knowest.

*Theo.* I can refuse thee nothing.  
Only I beg that thou wilt ask me  
nought

That answered may give pain.

*Gycia.* Nay, it is best  
That I know all. I could not bear to  
live

In ignorance, and yet I fear to grieve  
thee

By what I ask. Thy sister late has  
left me—

*Theo.* Ask not of her, I pray; I  
cannot answer.

*Gycia.* Nay, by thy love I ask it.  
Answer me.

*Theo.* Have me excused, I pray.

*Gycia.* Then, I am answered.  
My husband, she affirms, betrayed her  
honour

In Bosphorus, and now denies the  
crime.

Thou knowest it true.

*Theo.* Alas! I cannot doubt it.  
I have known all for years.

*Gycia.* Ye saints of heaven!  
Is there no shame or purity in men,  
Nor room for trust in them? I am a  
wife

Who thought she did possess her  
husband wholly,

Virgin with virgin. I have thought I  
knew

His inmost heart, and found it  
innocent;

And yet while thus I held him, while I  
lay

Upon his bosom, all these happy hours  
The venom of a shameful secret lurked  
Within his breast. Oh, monster of  
deceit,

Thou never lovedst as I! That I  
should give

The untouched treasure of my virgin  
heart

For some foul embers of a burnt-out love,  
And lavish on the waste a wanton left

My heart, my soul, my life! Oh, it is  
cruel!

I will never see him more, nor hear  
his voice,

But die unloved and friendless.

*[Weeps.]*

*Theo. (kneeling at her feet).* Dearest  
Gycia,

Thou canst not want a brother, friend,  
and lover

While I am living. Oh, my love, my  
 dear,  
 Whom I have loved from childhood,  
 put away  
 This hateful marriage, free thee from  
 the bonds  
 Of this polluted wedlock, and make  
 happy  
 One who will love thee always !

*Enter LYSIMACHUS imperat. ad.*

*Gycia.* Rise, Theodorus.  
 I have no love to give. I am a wife.  
 Such words dishonour me.

*Theo.* Forgive me, *Gycia*.  
 I know how pure thy soul, and would  
 not have thee  
 Aught other than thou art.

*Gycia.* I do forgive thee.  
 'Twas love confused thy reason ; but  
 be brave.  
 Set a guard on thy acts, thy words, thy  
 thoughts.

'Tis an unhappy world !

[THEODORUS kisses her hand and exits.

*Lys.* Most noble lady,  
 Forgive me if at an unfitting time,  
 Amid the soft devoirs of gallantry,  
 I thus intrude unwilling ; but I seek  
 The Prince Asander.

*Gycia.* I have nought to hide  
 My husband might not know.

*Lys.* Then, thou art, doubtless,  
 His wife, the Lady *Gycia*. Good my  
 lady,

With such a presence to become a  
 crown,

We would you were at Bosphorus.

*Gycia.* 'Tis clear  
 Thou art a stranger here, or thou  
 wouldst know

That never would I leave my native city  
 To win the crown of Rome.

*Lys.* Madam, 'tis pity.

*Gycia.* Sir, this is courtly talk. You  
 came to see

My husband ; I will order that they  
 send him

At once to you. [*Exit GYCIA.*

*Lys.* That was indeed good fortune  
 brought me hither

When her lover knelt to her. I do not  
 wonder

That kneel he should, for she is  
 beautiful

As Helen's self. There comes some  
 difference

Between her and Asander, and 'twere  
 strange

If I might not so work on't as to widen  
 The breach good fortune sends me, and  
 to bind,

Through that which I have seen, the  
 boy her husband.

To execute my will

*Enter ASANDER.*

*Asan.* Lysimachus,  
 I am rejoiced to see thee.

*Lys.* Good my lord,  
 How goes the world with thee ? Thou  
 art in bien

Graver than thou wast once.

*Asan.* I am ill at ease !  
 I am ill at ease ! How does the King  
 my father ?

*Lys.* Alas ! sir, he is ailing, and I  
 fear

Will never mend.

*Asan.* Is he in present danger ?

*Lys.* Ay, that he is. A month or  
 less from this

May see the end.

*Asan.* Keeps he his bed as yet ?

*Lys.* Nay, not yet, when I left him ;  
 but his mind

Turns always to his absent son with  
longing,  
And sometimes, as it were 'twixt sleep  
and waking,  
I hear him say, "Asander, oh, my  
son!  
Shall I not see thee more?"

*Asan.* Oh, my dear father!  
And dost thou love me thus, who have  
forgot thee  
These two long years? Belov'd, lonely  
life!  
Belov'd failing eyes! Lysimachus,  
I must go hence, and yet my honour  
binds me.  
O God, which shall I choose? They  
do forbid me -  
The ruler of this place and that good  
woman  
Who is my wife, but holds their cursed  
State  
More than my love—to go.

*Lys.* My prince, I come  
To find a way by which thou may'st go  
free  
From that which binds thee fast.  
This festival  
To the dead Linaechus will give the  
occasion  
To set thee free. If thou dost doubt to  
break  
Thy word, yet doth a stronger, straiter  
chain  
Bind thee—thy oath. Thou hast not  
forgot thy oath  
To Bosphorus?

*Asan.* Nay, I forget it not.  
But what is it thou wouldst of  
me?

*Lys.* Asander,  
The night which ends the festival shall  
see us  
Masters of Cherson.

*Asan.* Nay, but 'twere dishonour  
To set upon a friendly State from  
ambush—

'Twere murder, and not battle.

*Lys.* Art thou false  
To thy own land and to thy dying  
father?

*Asan.* That I am not; but never  
could I bear  
To play the midnight thief, and  
massacre  
Without announcement of legitimate  
war

Whom daily I have known. My wife  
I love  
With all the love of my soul. If she  
seem cold

When any word is spoken which may  
touch

The safety of the State, think you she  
would love

The husband who destroyed it? All  
my heart

Is in her keeping.

*Lys.* It is well indeed  
To have such faith. Doubtless the  
Lady Gycia  
Returns this pure affection.

*Asan.* I would doubt  
The saints in heaven sooner than her  
truth,

Which if I doubted, then the skies  
might fall,

The bounds of right and wrong might  
be removed,

The perjurer show truthful, and the  
wanton

Chaste as the virgin, and the cold, pure  
saint

More foolish than the prodigal who eats  
The husks of sense—it were all one to  
me;

I could not trust in virtue.

*Lys.* Thou art changed  
Since when thy ship set sail from  
Bosphorus ;  
Thou didst not always think with such  
fond thought  
As now thou dost. Say, didst thou  
find thy bride  
Heart-whole as thou didst wish ? Had  
she no lover  
Ere yet thou camest ?

*Asan.* Nay, nay ; I found my wife  
Virgin in heart and soul.

*Lys.* My Lord Asander,  
Art thou too credulous here ? What if  
I saw her  
On that same spot, not half an hour  
ago,  
In tears, and kneeling at her feet a  
gallant  
Noble and comely as a morn in June,  
Who bade her break, with passionate  
words of love,  
Her hateful marriage vows, and make  
him blest  
Who must for ever love ?

*Asan.* Thou sawest my wife  
Gycia, my pearl of women, my life, my  
treasure ?  
Nay, nay, 'tis some sick dream ! Thou  
art mistaken.

Who knelt to her ?

*Lys.* She called him Theodorus.

*Asan.* Irene's brother ! Who was  
it who said

He loved her without hope ? Lysi-  
machus,  
What is it that thou sawest ? Come,  
'tis a jest !  
Kneeling to Gycia, praying her to  
fly !

Nay, nay, what folly is this ? [*Laughs.*

*Lys.* My lord, I swear  
It is no jest indeed, but solemn earnest.

I saw him kneel to her ; I heard the  
passion  
Burn through his voice. '

*Asan.* And she ? What did my  
lady ?

She did repulse him sternly ?

*Lys.* Nay, indeed,  
She wept ; was greatly moved, and  
whispered to him,

" I am a wife."

*Asan.* Peace, peace ! I will not  
hear

Another word. How little do they  
know thee,  
My white, pure dove ! My Lord  
Lysimachus,  
Some glamour has misled thee.

*Lys.* Well, my lord,  
I should rejoice to think it, but I cannot  
Deny my eyes and ears. Is not this  
noble

The brother of the lady who was once  
At Bosphorus at Court, and now attends  
The Lady Gycia ?

*Asan.* Ay, indeed he is.

*Lys.* Well, she is near at hand ; if  
thy belief  
Inclines not to my tale—which yet is  
true—

Couldst thou not ask of her if ere your  
marriage

Her brother was enamoured of your  
wife,  
And she of him ?

*Asan.* That might I do indeed.  
But, sooth to say, I would not speak  
again  
With her you name ; and it may be  
indeed,

I know her well, the Lady Gycia,  
Who is angered with her for what cause  
I know not,  
Might well resent the converse.

*Lys.* Prince Asander,  
There is no man so blind as he who  
closes  
His eyes to the light and will not have  
it shine,  
As thou dost now.

*Asan.* Then will I see this lady,  
Though knowing it is vain.

[*Exit ASANDER.*]

*Lys.* I do not know  
What he will hear, but this at least I  
know :  
That woman loves him, and will lie to  
sow  
Dissension 'twixt these lovers which  
accomplished,  
The rest is easy, and I hold this Chet-  
sen  
To make or mar at will. Ha ! a good  
thought.  
I will send a message to the Lady  
Gycia  
Which shall ensure't. If she dislikes  
her friend,  
It is odds of ten to one some jealous  
humour  
Has caused it, or may grow of it.

[*Writes.*]

"Dear lady,  
Thou art wronged ; the Prince Asander  
presently  
Is with Irene alone. Seek them, and  
wring  
Confession of their fault."

[*Summons a Messenger.*]

Ho there ! convey  
These to the Lady Gycia, but stay  
not  
To tell her whence they come.

*Mess.* I go, my lord.

# SCENE IV.--IRENE'S PRISON.

*IRENE : afterwards ASANDER and  
GYCIA.*

*Ire.* To think that once I loved  
that haughty woman !  
Ah, that was long ago, before love came  
To tear our lives asunder. Though her  
power  
Can pen me here a prisoner, yet I know  
That I have pierced her heart. Oh, it  
is sweet  
To be revenged, and know that ven-  
geance brings  
Victory in its train ! If I had power  
To make Asander jealous of this wonder,  
Then all were easy. But I know no  
means  
Whereby from this strait prison I might  
sow  
Suspicion of her who has never given  
A shadow of cause.

*Attendant.* The Lord Asander  
comes.

[*Enter ASANDER.*]

*Asan.* Lady, I grieve that thou art  
in this place,  
And fain would set thee free. Tell me  
what cause  
Has brought thee hither.

*Ire.* Ask me not, my lord ;  
I cannot tell thee.

*Asan.* Nay, but know I must,  
To plead thy cause.

*Ire.* 'Twas too great love of thee,  
The love which thou didst spurn, that  
brought me here.

*Asan.* But how should that be so ?

*Ire.* The Lady Gycia,  
Holding thee to thy promise that thou  
wouldst not

Go hence—no, not to close thy father's  
eyes—

Took umbrage that I spoke with scant  
respect

Of such unreasoning and unnatural  
bond

As that which she approves.

*Asan.* Then am I grateful  
For thy good-will, and grieve that it  
should bring thee

To pine a prisoner here, and will essay  
What reason can to free thee.

*Ire.* Thanks, my lord,  
I would that *thou* wert free. I knew  
the King,

And did receive much fatherly affection  
From that most reverend man. I grieve  
to hear

That he lies sick, and would rejoice to  
tend him

As if I were a daughter.

*Asan.* Gentle lady,  
No other voice of sympathy than thine  
Have I yet heard in Cherson, and I  
thank thee

For thy good-will.

*Ire.* 'Tis always thine, my lord,  
And more, though I should end my  
wretched days  
In prison for thy sake.

*Asan.* I thank thee, lady,  
And fain would ask of thee a greater  
kindness :

I would that thou wouldst tell me of  
thy brother.

*Ire.* My brother Theodorus? What  
of him?

*Asan.* This only, Did he, ere I  
knew my wife,  
Bear towards her a great though inno-  
cent love?

*Ire.* A great though innocent love?  
Ay, a great love,

For certain. Spoke she not of it to  
thee?

*Asan.* No word!

*Ire.* Ah! yet, maybe, 'twas inno-  
cent—

Nay, I believe it, though she spoke not  
of it,

And 'tis the wont of wives to laugh and  
boast

Of innocent conquests.

*Asan.* Nay, she spoke no word.

*Ire.* And did no other of thy friends  
at Cherson

Tell thee? Why, 'twas the talk of all  
the city

How close they grew together, till thy  
coming

And the necessities of Cherson turned  
Her eyes from him to thee.

*Asan.* And does he still  
Bear love for her?

*Ire.* And does he still bear love?  
Ay, passionate love. The heart which  
truly loves

Puts not its love aside for ends of State,  
Or marriage bonds, or what the dullard  
law

Suffers or does not suffer, but grows  
stronger

For that which seeks to thwart it.

*Asan.* And did she  
My wife return this love?

*Ire.* Ay, so 'twas said.  
Ask me no more, I pray!

*Enter GYCIA unperceived.*

*Asan.* Nay, by the love  
Thou bearest to me, speak!

*Gycia.* My Lord Asander,  
What dost thou with this woman thus  
alone?

*Asan.* 'Twere best thou didst not  
ask.

*Gycia.* I have a right ;  
I will be answered. First, thou didst  
deny  
Thou knewest aught of her ; then said  
her nature  
Was such I might not call her friend,  
or live  
With her within four walls ; and now,  
her fault—  
Which she herself proclaimed—penning  
her here  
In a close prison, thou my husband  
comest  
To comfort her, 'twould seem—to travel  
o'er  
Again the old foul paths and secretly  
To gloat on the old passion.

*Asan.* Nay, I came  
Not for this cause, but one which I will  
tell thee.

I came to question of thy former love.

*Gycia.* To question *her* of *me* ?

*Asan.* To know the cause  
That made my wife, scarce one short  
hour ago,  
Within my home, when hardly I had  
left her,  
Receive alone a lover kneeling to her  
With words of passionate love, and  
whisper to him,  
“I am a wife.”

*Gycia.* Hast thou no shame,  
Asander,  
To speak such words to me before this  
woman,  
Who knows her brother's life ?

*Ira.* Nay, prithee, madam,  
Appeal not to me thus ; I could say  
much  
On which I would keep silence.

*Gycia.* Thou base woman,  
And thou poor dupe or most perfidious  
man,

It were to honour ye to make defence  
Against a wanton and her paramour ;  
But thee, Asander, never will I take  
To my heart again, till thou hast put  
from thee

This lying accusation, and dost ask  
Pardon that thou hast doted with this  
base wretch  
To impugn my honour.

*Asan.* Thou hast said no word  
Of answer to my charge ; thy bold  
defiance  
Argues thy guilt.

*Gycia.* My guilt ? And canst  
thou dare  
To say this thing to me ? I will speak  
no word ;

Denial were disgrace. Sir, I will have  
you  
Leave this place quickly.

*Asan.* Madam, I obey you,  
[*Exit.*

*Gycia.* And I too go. [*Exit.*

*Ira.* I hold these hapless fools  
In the hollow of my hand.

# SCENE V.—OUTSIDE THE PALACE.

LYSIMACHUS and three Courtiers ;  
afterwards ASANDER.

*Lys.* My lords, what have you to  
report ? Have the men arrived ?

*1st Court.* For a week past they  
have been arriving at the rate of fifty a  
day. The ships anchor in due course.  
At dead of night, when everything is  
still, the merchandise is landed and  
conveyed well-disguised to the disused  
granaries adjoining Lamachus' palace,  
with good store of arms and provisions.

*2nd Court.* Yes, and by the day of  
the festival we shall have more than



five hundred well-armed men within the walls, who, while the people are feasting, will bear down all opposing forces and open the gates to the larger body, who will lie concealed in the grain-ships in the harbour.

*Lys.* Does no one suspect, think you, as yet?

*1st Court.* Not a soul. The stores are landed at midnight, and the place is haunted and full of noises.

*3rd Court.* Does the Prince know?

*Lys.* Not yet, not a word. I can't trust him with his blind love for his wife.

*3rd Court.* What if he will not be of us?

*Lys.* Then he shall be put under hatches at once for Bosphorus, and may take his wife with him if he pleases.

*1st Court.* But will he pardon the deed?

*Lys.* The lad is a good lad enough, but weak as water. The world always pardons successful enterprises. Besides, I am in great hopes that he has so quarrelled with the ruler of Cherson, and may be, moreover, so out of conceit with his wife, that we can do as we will with him.

*2nd Court.* But be prudent, my Lord Lysimachus, I beg, for we know not how far he is with us, and if he is against us now, it may take more than we know to keep our heads on our shoulders.

*Lys.* My lords, you shall not lose a drop of your blood. But here is my Lord Asander. He looks cast down enough, in all conscience.

*Enter ASANDER.*

Well, Prince, hast thou seen the lady?

*Asan.* Speak not to me of her, I pray.

I must leave this accursed place at once and for ever, and must take my wife with me. Once in Bosphorus, I may know again the happiness which is denied me here. I will not stay here a day. Is there any ship from Bosphorus in harbour? Get me away to-night secretly, and the Lady Gycia with me.

*Lys.* My lord, there are many ships here from Bosphorus, but none empty or which can be spared now; but it wants but two days to the festival, and if thou wilt tarry until then, it may be we can so arrange that either thou mayst set sail for Bosphorus at will or bring Bosphorus hither at will.

*Asan.* What do these words mean? You speak in riddles. I care not what becomes of me, but remember my honour, Lysimachus, my honour! If any scheme against the State of Cherson is in your mind, I will have none of it. I want nothing of these people, only to be allowed to turn my back upon them and their intrigues for ever, and to carry the wife whom I love far away from the air of chicane and base deceit which makes this Cherson a hell.

*Lys.* My Lord Asander, thou hast not forgot

Thy oath which thou didst swear ere first you left

Our Bosphorus, that, come what fate should come,

Thou wouldst not forget her. Now, as Fate would have it,

These gentlemen and I, hearing report Of the grand festival which now approaches,

Have ta'en such measures as may make our city

Mistress of this her rival. Day by day

Ships laden deep with merchandise  
 cast anchor  
 By Lamachus's palace, and unload  
 At dead of night their tale of armed  
 men,  
 And by to-morrow night, which is the  
 eve  
 Of the feast, five hundred men-at-arms  
 or more  
 In a dark hall, long empty and disused,  
 These fools deem haunted, where the  
 sounds they make  
 Seem not of earth, and none draw near  
 to hear,  
 Will lie concealed. These, when the  
 festival  
 Has spent itself, and the drowsed  
 citizens,  
 Heavy with meat and wine, are fast  
 asleep,  
 Will issue forth at midnight and will  
 seize  
 The guardians of the gates, and throw  
 them open  
 To an o'erwhelming force which fills  
 the ships  
 Which lie within the harbour. For the  
 rest,  
 Cherson is ours, thou free to go or stay,  
 King if thou wilt; but this, my lord,  
 know well—  
 Even if thou hast no reverence for thy  
 oath,  
 No power on earth can free thee from  
 thy bonds  
 Or speed thee hence, if still this cursed  
 State  
 Keeps its free power. Therefore, look  
 well to it.

*Asan.* I cannot do this thing. I  
 am no thief  
 Or midnight murderer, but a prince and  
 soldier.

Place me in open battle, and I care  
 not

For bloodshed; but this murderous  
 intrigue,

I will have none o't.

*Lys.* Nay, my lord, in sooth,  
 Why think of bloodshed? If our  
 scheme go right

(And nought can mar it now), what  
 need of blood?

These smooth knaves, though they  
 fight behind their walls

With cunning enginey, yet when they  
 see

Our army in their streets, will straight  
 grow prudent

And hug discretion. But, indeed, my  
 lord,

We have gone too far to pause, and if  
 thou like not

Our scheme, which makes for thee and  
 for our State,

We cannot risk that thou denounce our  
 plan,

And therefore, if thou wilt not join with  
 us,

The safety of ourselves and of the  
 State

Holds thee a prisoner pent in close  
 duress

Till victory is ours, and thou mayst  
 take

The fruit of others' daring, while thy  
 wife

Deserts her doubting and dishonoured  
 lord

For one who dares to act and play his  
 part

As a man should.

*Asan. (after hesitation).* I do not  
 hold with you,

That a man's oath can bind him to his  
 God

To do what else were wrong. Yet,  
 since you swear  
 Your purpose is not bloodshed, and my  
 will  
 Is impotent to stay your choice, and  
 chiefly  
 Because I am cast down and sick at  
 heart,  
 And without any trust in God or man,  
 I do consent to your conspiracy,  
 Loving it not.

*Iys.* There spoke my lord the  
 Prince.  
 We will succeed or die.

*Asan.* I would sooner die.

#### ACT IV.

##### SCENE I.—CHERSON. IRENE'S PRISON.

*IRENE ; then the Gaoler's Child ; afterwards GYCIA.*

*Ire.* Ah me ! The heaviness of  
 prisoned days !  
 Heigho ! 'Tis weary work in prison  
 here.  
 What though I know no loss but  
 liberty,  
 I have everything at will—food, service,  
 all  
 That I should have, being free—yet  
 doth constraint  
 Poison life at its spring ; and if I  
 thought  
 This woman's jealous humour would  
 endure,  
 I would sooner be a hireling set to tend  
 The kine upon the plains, in heat or  
 cold,  
 Chilled through by the sharp east,  
 scorched by the sun,

So only I might wander as I would  
 At my own will, than weary to be free  
 From this luxurious cell. Hark !

*[The tramp of armed men is heard.]*

What was that sound ?  
 I could swear I heard the measured  
 tramp of men  
 And ring of mail, yet is it but illusion.  
 Last night I thought I heard it as I lay  
 Awake at dead of night. Mere fantasy  
 Born of long solitude, for here there are  
 No soldiers nor mailed feet.

*[Again heard.]*

Hark ! once again.  
 Nay, I must curb these fancies.

*Enter Child.*

*Child.* Gentle lady.  
*Ire.* Speak, little one. Come  
 hither.

*Child.* Gentle lady,  
 My father, who is Warder of this  
 tower,  
 Bade me come hither and ask thee if  
 thou wouldst  
 That I should hold thy distaff, or might  
 render  
 Some other service.

*Ire.* Ay, child ; a good thought.  
 Bring me my spinning-wheel.

*[Child brings it.]*

*Ire. (spinning).* The light is fading  
 fast, but I would choose  
 This twilight, if thou wilt not be afraid  
 Of the darkness, little one.

*Child.* Nay, that I am not,  
 With one so good as thou.

*Ire.* Nay, child, it may be  
 I am not all thou think'st me.

*Child.* But, dear lady,  
 Are not all noble ladies good ?

*Ire.* Not all,  
 Nor many, maybe.

*Child.* To be sure they are not,  
Else were they not imprisoned.

*Ire.* Little one,  
Not all who pine in prison are not good,  
Nor innocent who go free.

*Child.* \* The Lady Gycia,  
Is she not good?

*Ire.* It may be that she is.  
'Tis a vile world, my child.

*Child.* Nay, I am sure  
The Lady Gycia is as white and pure  
As are the angels. When my mother  
died

She did commend me to her, and she  
promised

To keep me always.

*Ire.* But she sent me here.

*Child.* Ah! lady, then I fear thou  
art not good.

I am sorry for thee.

*Ire.* So, my child, am I.  
[*The tramp of armed feet is heard again.*]

*Child.* Ah! lady, what is that? I  
am afraid.

Didst hear the ghostly feet?

*Ire.* What heardst thou, child?

*Child.* A tramp of armed men and  
ring of mail.

*Ire.* Then, 'tis no fancy of my weary  
brain.

If it comes again I must inquire into it.

'Tis passing strange. Be not afraid,  
my child.

'Twas but the wind which echoed  
through the void

Of the vast storehouses below us.

Come, [Spinning.

Let us to spinning. Twirl and twirl  
and twirl;

'Tis a strange task.

*Child.* Lady, I love it dearly.  
My mother span, and I would sit by her  
The livelong day.

*Ire.* Didst ever hear the tale  
Of the Fates and how they spin?

*Child.* I do not think so.  
Wilt tell me?

*Ire.* There were three weird sisters  
once,

Clotho and Lachesis and Atropos,  
Who spun the web of fate for each new  
life,

Sometimes, as I do now, a brighter  
thread

Woven with the dark, and sometimes  
black as night,

Until at last came Atropos and cut  
The fine-worn life-thread thus.

[*Cuts the thread; the head of the spindle  
rolls away.*]

*Child.* And hast thou cut  
Some life-thread now?

*Ire.* My child, I am no Fate,  
And yet I know not; but the spindle's  
head

Rolled hence to yonder corner. Let us  
seek it.

Hast found it?

*Child.* Nay, there is so little light,  
I think that it has fallen in the crevice  
Beneath yon panel.

*Ire.* Stoop and seek it, child.  
Perchance the panel slides, and then,  
it may be,

We shall let in the light.

[*Draws back the panel and discovers a  
bright light, files of armed men,  
and ASANDER in the midst.*]

*Child.* Ay, there it is;  
We have it, we have found it.

[*Sliding panel back again.*]

*Ire.* What have we found?  
What have we found? Yes, little one,  
'tis found!

Run away now—I fain would be  
alone—

And come back presently.

[*Kisses Child, who goes.*

"These were the sounds  
I heard and thought were fancy's. All  
is clear

As is the blaze of noon. The Prince  
Asander

Is traitor to the State, and will o'er-  
whelm it

When all the citizens are sunk in sleep  
After to-morrow's feast. Well, what  
care I?

He is not for me, whether we call him  
King

Or Archon; and for these good men of  
Cherson,

What is their fate to me? If he  
succeed,

As now he must, since no one knows  
the secret,

'Twill only be a change of name—no  
more.

The King and Queen will hold a  
statelier Court

And live contented when the thing is  
done,

And that is all. For who will call it  
treason

When victory crowns the plot? But  
stay! a gleam

Of new-born hope. What, what if it  
should fail

As I could make it fail? What if this  
woman,

Full of fantastic reverence for the dead,  
And nourished on her cold republican  
dream,

Should learn the treason ere 'twas done  
and mar it?

Would not Asander hate her for the  
failure?

And she him for the plot? I know her  
well,

I know her love for him, but well I  
know

She is so proud of her Athenian blood  
And of this old republic, she would  
banish

Her love for less than this. Once  
separated,

The Prince safe over seas in Bosphorus,  
His former love turned to injurious  
pride,

I might prevail! I would!

*Re-enter CHILD.*

Nay, little one,

We will spin no more to-day. I prithee  
go

And seek the Lady Gycia. Say to her,  
By all the memory of our former love  
I pray that she will come to me at  
once.

Lose not a moment. [*Exit Child.*

Hark! the tramp again;  
Again the ring of mail. I wonder  
much

If she shall hear it first, or first the eye  
Shall slay her love within her.

*Enter GYCIA.*

*Gycia.* Thou dost ask  
My presence; wherefore is it?

*Ire.* *Gycia,*  
Thou dost not love me, yet would I  
requite

Thy wrong with kindness. That thy  
love was false

To thee, thou knowest, but it may be  
still

There is a deeper falsehood than to  
thee,

And thou shalt know it. Dost thou  
hear that sound?

[*The tramp of men again heard.*  
What means it, think you?

*Gycia.* Nay, I cannot tell.  
'Tis like the tramp of armed men.

*Ire.* It is ;  
And who are they ?

*Gycia.* Young citizens of Cherson,  
Maybe, rehearsing for to-morrow's  
pageant

And the procession. [*Going.*

*Ire.* Stay, thou stubborn woman,  
Canst bear to see, though the sight  
blight thy life ?

*Gycia.* I know not what thou  
wouldst, but I can bear it.

*Ire.* Though it prove thy love a  
traitor ?

*Gycia.* That it will not !

*Ire.* Then, make no sound, but see  
what I will show thee.

Look now ! Behold thy love !

[*Draws back panel, and discovers*  
*ASANDER with the soldiers of*  
*Bosphorus standing in line.*  
*ASANDER'S voice heard.*

*Asan.* At stroke of midnight  
To-morrow night be ready.

*Soldiers.* Ay, my lord.

[*GYCIA tottering back. IRENE slides*  
*back the panel, and GYCIA sets*  
*her back against it, half faint-*  
*ing ; IRENE regarding her with*  
*triumph.*

*Gycia.* Was that my husband ? and  
those men around him

Soldiers of Bosphorus, to whom he  
gave

Some swift command ? What means  
it all, ye saints ?

What means it ? This the husband of  
my love,

Upon whose breast I have lain night  
by night

For two sweet years—my husband  
whom my father

Loved as a son, whose every thought I  
knew,

Or deemed I did, lurking in ambush  
here

Upon the eve of our great festival,  
Scheming some bloody treachery to take  
Our Cherson in the toils ? Oh, 'tis  
too much ;

I cannot trust my senses ! 'Twas a  
dream !

*Ire.* No dream, but dreadful truth !

*Gycia.* Thou cruel woman,  
How have I harmed thee, thou shouldst  
hate me thus ?

But 'twas no dream. Why was it else  
that he,

But for some hateful treachery, devised  
This festival ? Why was it that he grew  
So anxious to go hence and take me  
with him,

But that guilt made him coward, and  
he feared

To see his work ? Oh, love for ever  
lost,

And with it faith gone out ! what is't  
remains

But duty, though the path be rough  
and trod

By bruised and bleeding feet ? Oh,  
what is it

Is left for me in life but death alone,  
Which ends it ?

*Ire.* Gycia, duty bids thee banish  
Thy love to his own State, and then  
disclose

The plot thou hast discovered. It may  
be

That thou mayst join him yet, and yet  
grow happy.

*Gycia.* Never ! For duty treads  
another path

Than that thou knowest. I am my  
father's daughter.

It is not mine to pardon or condemn ;  
That is the State's alone. 'Tis for the  
State  
To banish, not for me, and therefore  
surely  
I must denounce these traitors to the  
Senate,  
And leave the judgment theirs.

*Ire.* (*kneeling*). Nay, nay, I pray  
thee,  
Do not this thing ! Thou dost not know  
how cruel  
Is State-craft, or what cold and stony  
hearts  
Freeze in their politic breasts.

*Gycia.* *Thou* kneel'st to me  
To spare my husband ! Think'st thou  
I love him less  
Than thou dost, wanton ?

*Ire.* Gycia, they will kill him.  
Get him away to-night to Bosphorus.  
Thou dost not know these men !

*Gycia.* I know them not ?  
I who have lived in Chetson all my  
days,  
And trust the State ? Nay, I will get  
me hence.  
And will denounce this treason to the  
Senate.  
There lies my duty clear, and I will  
do it ;  
I fear not for the rest. The State is  
clement  
To vanquished foes, and doubtless will  
find means  
To send them hence in safety. For  
myself

I know not what may come—a broken  
heart,  
Maybe, and death to mend it. But  
for thee,  
Thou shameless wanton, if thou breathe  
a sound

Or make a sign to them, thou diest to-  
night

With torture.

*Ire.* Spare him ! Do not this  
thing, Gycia ! [*Exit GYCIA.*  
O God, she is gone ! He is lost ! and I  
undone ! [*Swoons.*

SCENE II.—ROOM IN LAMACHUS'S  
PALACE.

LYSIMACHUS, MEGACLES, Courtiers ;  
*afterward*, ASANDER.

*Lys.* Well, good Megacles, I hope  
you are prepared to carry out your  
function. It will be a busy and anxious  
day to-morrow, no doubt, and most of  
us will be glad when midnight strikes.

*Meg.* My Lord Lysimachus, I hope  
so. I have not closed an eye for the  
last two nights. As to the Procession,  
I flatter myself that no better-arranged  
pomp has ever defiled before Cæsar's  
Palace. It will be long, it will be  
splendid, it will be properly marshalled.  
There is no other man in the Empire  
who knows the distinctions of rank or  
the mysteries of marshalling better than  
I do. Look at the books I have studied.  
There is the treatise of the Learned and  
Respectable Symmachus on Processions.  
That is one. There is the late divine  
Emperor Theodosius on Dignities and  
Titles of Honour. That is two. There  
is our Learned and Illustrious Cham-  
berlain Procopius's treatise on the  
office and duties of a Count of the  
Palace. That, as no doubt you know,  
is in six large volumes. That is three,  
or, nay, eight volumes. Oh, my poor  
head ! And I have said nothing of the  
authorities on Costume—a library, I

assure you, in themselves. Yes, it has been an anxious time, but a very happy one. I wish our young friends here would devote a little more time to such serious topics, and less to such frivolities as fighting and making love. The latter is a fine art, no doubt, and, when done according to rule, is well enough; but as for fighting, getting oneself grimed with dust and sweat, and very likely some vulgar churl's common blood to boot—pah! it is intolerable to think of it.

*1st Court.* Ah! good Megacles, I am afraid that the world cannot spare its soldiers yet for many years to come. So long as there is evil in the world, and lust of power and savagery and barbarism, so long, depend upon it, there is room and need for the soldier.

*Meg.* Certainly, my lord, certainly; and besides, they are very highly decorative too. Nothing looks better to my mind at a banquet than bright gay faces and lithe young figures set in a shining framework of mail. By the way, my Lord Lysimachus, it was kind of you to provide our procession with a strong detachment of fine young soldiers from Bosphorus. I have secured a prominent place for them, and the effect will be perfect. I trust the Lady Melissa will like it.

*Lys.* My lord, you are mistaken; there are no soldiers from Bosphorus here.

*Meg.* But I was with the Prince last night, and saw them.

*Lys.* I tell you you are mistaken. There are none here. Do you understand me? There are none here.

*and Court.* Nay, indeed, my Lord Megacles. We were trying, with a

view to the pageant, how a number of young men of Cherson would look in the array of Bosphorus; but we gave it up, since we feared that they would bear them so clumsily that they would mar the whole effect.

*Meg.* Ah, that explains it; quite right, quite right. Well, I see I was mistaken. But I wish I could have had soldiers from Bosphorus. They are the one thing wanting to make to-morrow a perfect success, as the Lady Melissa said.

*Lys.* They are indeed, as you say. But, my Lord Megacles, pray do not whisper abroad what you have said here; these people are so jealous. They would grow sullen, and spoil the pageant altogether.

*Meg.* Ah, my lord, you have a good head. I will not breathe a word of it till the day is done.

*Lys.* Thanks, my lord, and as I know you will be weary with the long day's work and your great anxieties, I am going to lay a little friendly compulsion upon you. You must leave the banquet to-morrow and go to rest by eleven o'clock at latest.

*Meg.* Well, my lord, I am not so young as I was, and if I have your permission to leave before all is over, well and good. No one knows what an anxious day is before me, and I have no doubt I shall have earned my night's rest by then. But I have much yet to do, so with your permission I will wish you good night.

[*Exit MEGACLES, bowing low to each with exaggerated gestures.*]

*Lys.* Poor soul, poor soul! If any fight comes, it would be as cruel to let him take his part with men as it would be if he were a woman or a child.



*Enter ASANDER.*

Welcome, my Lord Asander. Hast thou seen our men, and are they ready for to-morrow?

*Asan.* I have just come from them, and they are ready, But I am not. I pray you, let this be;

Send back these men to-night. I am oppressed

By such o'er-mastering presages of ill As baffle all resolve.

*Lys.* My Lord Asander, It is too late. Wouldst thou, then, break thy oath?

Wouldst thou live here a prisoner, nor behold

Thy father, though he die? Wouldst thou thy country

Should spurn thee as the traitor whose malignance

Blighted her hard-won gains? It is too late!

It is too late!

*Asan.* I am grown infirm of will As any dotard. I will go on now So that thou dost no murder.

*Lys.* Why was it We came in such o'erwhelming force, but that

We sought to shed no blood?

*Asan.* I will be ready, Though with a heavy heart. To-morrow night

At stroke of twelve, when all the feast is done,

And all asleep, we issue from the palace,

Seize the guards at their posts, and open wide

The gates to the strong force which from the ships

At the same hour shall land. The citizens,

Heavy with wine, will wake to find their city

Our own beyond recall.

*Lys.* Ay, that's the scheme, And nought can mar it now. Good night, my lord.

Sleep well; there is much to do.

*Asan.* Good night, my lords! [*Exit ASANDER.*]

*Lys.* No bloodshed! Why, what fools love makes of men!

I have seen this very lad dash through the ranks

Of hostile spearmen, cut and hack and thrust

As in sheer sport. There will be blood shed, surely,

Unless these dogs have lost their knack of war

As he has; but we have them unprepared,

And shall prevail, and thou shalt be avenged,

My father slain, and thou, my murdered brother,

Shalt be avenged! My lords, you know what work

Is given each to do. Be not too chary

Of your men's swords; let them strike sudden terror.

Slay all who do resist, or if they do not,

Yet slay them still. My lords, give you good night.

To-morrow at midnight, at the stroke of twelve—

At the stroke of twelve!

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE III.—THE COUNCIL CHAMBER  
OF THE SENATE OF CHERSON.

ZETHO and Senators ; afterwards  
GYCIA.

*Zet.* Most worthy brethren, Senators  
of Cherson,  
In great perplexity of mind and will  
I summon ye to-night. The Lady  
Gycia,  
Our Lamachus's daughter, sends re-  
quest,  
Urgent as 'twere of instant life and  
death,  
That I should call ye here. What care  
can move  
Such anxious thought in her, on this the  
eve  
Of the high festival herself has founded,  
I know not, but 'twould seem the very  
air  
Is full of floating rumours, vague alarms,  
Formless suspicions which elude the  
grasp,  
Unspoken presages of coming ill  
Which take no shape. For whence  
should danger come ?  
We are at peace with all. Our former  
foe  
Is now our dearest friend ; the Prince  
Asander,  
Though of a hasty spirit and high  
temper,  
Dwells in such close, concordant har-  
mony  
With his loved wife that he is wholly  
ours ;  
And yet though thus at peace, rumours  
of war  
And darkling plots beset us. Is it not  
thus ?  
Have ye heard aught ?

*1st Sen.* Zetho, 'tis true. Last  
night, a citizen  
Sware he heard clang of arms and ring  
of mail  
At midnight by the house of Lamachus !  
*2nd Sen.* My freedman, coming  
home at grey of dawn,  
Saw a strange ship unload her mer-  
chandise,  
And one bale chanced to fall, and from  
it came  
Groanings and drops of blood !

*3rd Sen.* Two nights ago,  
The ways being white with snow, I on  
the quay  
Saw the thick-planted marks of armed  
feet ;  
But, rising with the dawn, I found the  
place  
Swept clean with care !

*Zet.* Brethren, I know not what  
These things portend.

*Enter GYCIA.*

But see, she comes ! Good daughter,  
Why is thy check so pale ?

*Gycia.* This is the wont  
Of women. Grief drives every drop of  
blood  
Back to the breaking heart, which love  
calls forth  
To mantle on the cheek. Sirs, I have  
come  
On such an errand as might drive a  
woman  
Stronger than I to madness ; I have  
come  
To tell you such a tale as well might  
fetter  
My tongue and leave me speechless.  
Pity me  
If I do somewhat wander in my  
talk !

'Tis scarce an hour ago, that in my  
house,  
Drawing some secret panel in the wall,  
I saw the long hall filled with armed  
men

Of Bosphorus, and at their head—O  
Heaven,

I cannot say it!—at their head I saw  
My husband, my Asander, my own  
love,

[Senators rise with strong emotion.  
Who ordered them and bade them all  
stand ready

To-morrow night at midnight. What  
means this?

What else than that these traitorous  
bands shall slay

Our Cherson's liberties, and give to  
murder

Our unsuspecting people, whom the  
feast

Leaves unprepared for war? I pray  
you, sirs,

Lose not one moment. Call the citizens  
To arms while yet 'tis time! Defeat  
this plot!

Do justice on these traitors! Save the  
city,

Though I am lost!

Zet. Daughter, thy loyal love  
To our dear city calls for grateful honour  
From us who rule. In thy young veins  
the blood

Of patriot Lamachus flows to-day as  
strong

As once it did in his; nay, the warm  
tide

Which stirred the lips of bold Demos-  
thenes

And all that dauntless band who of old  
time

Gave heart and life for Athens, still is  
thine

In our Hellenic story, there is none  
Who has done more than thou, who  
hast placed love,

Wedlock, and queenly rule, and all  
things dear

To a tender woman's heart, below the  
State—

A patriot before all. Is there no favour  
A State preserved may grant thee?

Gycia. Noble Zetho,  
I ask but this. I know my husband's  
heart,

How true it was and loyal. He is  
led,

I swear, by evil counsels to this crime:  
And maybe, though I seek not to ex-  
cuse him,

It was the son's love for his dying sire,  
Whom he should see no more, that  
scheming men

Have worked on to his ruin. Banish  
him

To his own city, though it break my  
heart,

But harm him not; and for those  
wretched men

Whose duty 'tis to obey, shed not their  
blood,

But let the vengeance of our city fall  
Upon the guilty only.

Zet. Brethren all,  
Ye hear what 'tis she asks, and though  
to grant it

Is difficult indeed, yet her petition  
Comes from the saviour of the State. I  
think

We well may grant her prayer. Though  
well I know

How great the danger, yet do I believe  
It may be done. Is it so, worthy  
brethren?

[Senators nod assent.  
Daughter, thy prayer is granted.

*Gycia.*                   Sirs, I thank you ;  
I love you for your mercy.

*Zet.*                       For the rest,  
I counsel that we do not rouse the city.  
'Twere of no use to-night to set our  
    arms,  
Blunt with long peace and rusted with  
    disuse,  
Against these banded levies. By to-  
    morrow—  
And we are safe till then—we shall  
    have time  
To league together such o'erwhelming  
    force  
As may make bloodshed needless, vain  
    their plot,  
And mercy possible. Meantime, dear  
    lady,  
Breathe not a word of what thine eyes  
    have seen,  
But bear thyself as though thou hadst  
    seen nothing,  
And had no care excepting to do honour  
To thy dead sire ; and when the weary  
    day  
Tends to its close, school thou thy heavy  
    heart,  
And wear what mask of joy thou canst,  
    and sit  
Smiling beside thy lord at the high  
    feast,  
Where all will meet. See that his cup  
    is filled  
To the brim ; drink healths to Bosphorus  
    and Cherson.  
Seem thou to drink thyself, having a  
    goblet  
Of such a colour as makes water blush  
Rosy as wine. When all the strangers'  
    eyes  
Grow heavy, then, some half an hour  
    : or more  
From midnight, rise as if to go to rest,

Bid all good night, and thank them for  
    their presence.  
Then, issuing from the banquet-hall,  
    lock fast  
The great doors after thee, and bring  
    the key  
To us, who here await thee. Thus  
    shalt thou  
Save this thy State, and him thy love,  
    and all.  
For we will, ere the fateful midnight  
    comes,  
Send such o'erwhelming forces to sur-  
    round them  
That they must needs surrender, and  
    ere dawn  
Shall be long leagues away. We will  
    not shed  
A drop of blood, my daughter.

*Gycia.*                   Noble Zetho,  
I thank you and these worthy senators.  
I knew you would be merciful. I thank  
    you,  
And will obey in all things.

[Exit GYCIA.]

*Bardanes, 1st Sen.*   She is gone ;  
I durst not speak before her. Dost  
    thou know,  
Good Zetho, how infirm for war our  
    State  
After long peace has grown ? I doubt  
    if all  
The men whom we might arm before  
    the hour  
Are matched in numbers with those  
    murderous hordes ;  
While in experience of arms, in training,  
In everything that makes a soldier  
    strong,  
We are no match for them. Our para-  
    mount duty  
Is to the State alone, not to these  
    pirates

Who lie in wait to slay us ; nor to one  
 Who, woman-like, knows not our  
     strength or weakness,  
 Nor cares, if only she might wring a  
     promise  
 To spare her traitorous love. But we  
     have arts  
 Which these barbarians know not,  
     quenchless fires  
 Which in one moment can enwrap  
     their stronghold  
 In one red ring of ruin. My counsel  
     is,  
 That ere the hour of midnight comes  
     we place  
 Around the palace walls on every  
     side  
 Such store of fuel and oils and cunning  
     drugs  
 As at one sign may leap a wall of  
     fire  
 Impassable, and burn these hateful  
     traitors  
 Like hornets in their nest.

*Zetho.* Good brethren all,  
 Is this your will? Is it faith? Is it  
     honour, think you,  
 To one who has given all, for us to  
     break  
 Our solemn plighted word?

*and Sen.* We will not break it ;  
 We shed no drop of blood. The State  
     demands it ;  
 The safety of the State doth override  
 All other claim. The safety of the  
     State

Is more than all !

*All the Senators, with uplifted arms.*

Ay, Zetho, more than all !

*Zetho.* Then, be it as you will. See,  
     therefore, to it ;

Take measures that your will be done,  
     not mine.

Though I approve not, yet I may not  
     set

My will against the universal voice.

Save us our Cherson. For the rest I  
     care not,

Only I grieve to break our solemn  
     promise

To Lamachus's child. Poor heart !  
     poor heart !

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—OUTSIDE LAMACHUS'S PALACE.

MEGACLES, LYSIMACHUS, Courtiers,  
     and Citizens of Cherson.

*Meg.* Oh, this has been a happy  
 day. All has gone admirably. Not a  
 hitch in all the arrangements. Pre-  
 cedence kept, rank observed, dresses  
 all they should be. I do not, I really  
 do not think, though I say it who  
 should not, that the Imperial Chamber-  
 lain at Constantinople could have con-  
 ducted the matter better.

*1st Court.* Nay, that he could not,  
 good Megacles. Let us hope that  
 what remains to do will go as smoothly.

*Meg.* What remains? Doubtless you  
 mean the banquet. That is all arranged  
 long ago under three heads. First, the  
 order of entering the hall ; second, the  
 order of the seats ; third, the order of  
 going forth.

*Lys.* Doubtless the last will arrange  
 itself. Remember, the only order of  
 going to be observed is this, that thou  
 get thyself gone, and all the guests from  
 Cherson gone, fully half an hour before  
 midnight.

*Meg.* But, my lord, that is impos-

sible ; you ask too much. How long do you suppose it will take, at a moderate computation, to get one hundred men of ill-defined rank out of a room with a decent regard for Precedence. Why, I have seen it take an hour at the Palace, where everybody knew his place, and here I cannot undertake to do it under two.

*Lys.* My friend, you will get it done ; you will waive ceremony. None but the Prince and ourselves must remain within half an hour of midnight, and the hall must be cleared.

*Meg.* Ah, well, my Lord Lysimachus, the responsibility rests with you ; I will have none of it. It is as much as my reputation is worth. But if I do this, cannot you let me have a guard of honour of armed men to stand at intervals along the hall. I have been longing for them all day.

*Lys. (angrily).* Peace, fool ! I have told you before we have no soldiers here.

*[People of Cherson overhearing him.]*

*1st Cit.* Didst hear that old man ? He believes there are soldiers here. Whence do they come ? and why did the other check him ?

*Meg.* Well, my Lord Lysimachus, if not soldiers, men-at-arms, and these there certainly are, and highly decorative too.

*2nd Cit.* I hate these Bosphorians. What if the rumour should be true ? Pass the word to the citizens that they sleep not to-night, but keep their arms ready for what may come. We are a match for them, whatever may be their design. To-morrow we will probe this matter to its depths.

*and Court.* Depend upon it, there

is no time to lose if we would forestall these fellows. But here comes the procession to the banqueting-hall.

*[Citizens going to banquet two and two.]*

*Meg. (with a gold wand?).* This way, gentlemen ; this way, masters and mistresses ; this way, Respectables !

*[Accompanies them to the end of the stage towards the banqueting-hall in the distance. Returns to escort another party. Musicians, &c.]*

*Enter Senators, two and two.*

*Meg. (bowing profoundly three times).* Most Illustrious Senators ! this way, your Highnesses ; this way.

*Enter MELISSA and other Ladies.*

*(To MELISSA)* Fairest and loveliest of your adorable sex, your slave prostrates himself before your stainless and beatific feet *(bowing low and kissing his fingers)*. Illustrious Ladies, I pray you to advance.

*Lys. (with Courtiers standing apart).* A good appetite, my friends. Enjoy yourselves while you may.

*Bard.* We are quite ready, my Lord Lysimachus. Are you not *(with a sneer)* for the banquet ?

*Lys.* In good time, in good time. If they only knew. *{Aside.*

*Bard. (overhearing).* If you knew all, my friends.

*Meg. (returning).* I pray you, most Illustrious Senators, to excuse the absence of a guard of honour.

*Bard.* Nay, nay ; we are peaceful people, and have no armed men nearer than Bosphorus, as my Lord Lysimachus knows. There are plenty in that favoured State, no doubt.

*Lys. (confused).* What does this insolence mean? I would the hour were come.

*Enter ZETHO, with his retinue.*

*Meg.* Your Gravity, Your Sincerity, Your Sublime and Wonderful Magnitude, Your Illustrious and Magnificent Highness, I prostrate myself before Your Altitude. Will You deign to walk this way?

*Zetho.* My lord, I am no Cesar, but a simple citizen of Cherson, called by my fellows to preside over the State. Use not to me these terms, I pray of you, but lead on quickly.

*Meg.* I prostrate myself before Your Eminence.

*Enter ASANDER and GYCIA.*

*Meg. (returning).* Noble Prince, will your Illustrious Consort and yourself deign to follow me?

*Asan.* Nay, good Megacles, will you and these gentlemen go first, I have a word to say to the Lady Gycia. We will be with you before the guests are seated.

*Meg.* I obey, my Lord Asander, and will await you at the door.

[MEGACLES, LYSIMACHUS, and the rest, pass on.]

*Asan.* Gycia, though we have passed from amity  
And all our former love, yet would I pray you,  
By our sweet years of wedded happiness,  
Give ear to me a moment. It may be  
That some great shock may come to set our lives  
For evermore apart.

*Gycia.* Ah yes, Asander—  
For evermore apart!

*Asan.* And I would fain,  
If it must be, that thou shouldst know to-night

That never any woman on the earth  
Held me one moment in the toils of love

Except my wife.

*Gycia.* What! not Irene's self?

*Asan.* Never, I swear by Heaven.

She was a woman

In whom a hopeless passion burnt the springs

Of maiden modesty. I never gave her  
The solace of a smile.

*Gycia.* Dost thou say this?  
Is thy soul free from all offence with her,  
If thou camest now to judgment?

*Asan.* Ay, indeed,  
Free as a child's.

*Gycia.* Oh, my own love! my dear!  
Ah no! too late, too late!

[Embraces him.]

*Asan.* I ask thee not  
Counter assurance, since I know thy truth.

*Gycia.* Speakest thou of Theodorus?  
He loved me

Before I knew thee, but I loved no man  
Before I met Asander. When he knelt  
That day, it was in pity for my grief,  
Thinking thee false, and all his buried love

Burst into passionate words, which on  
the instant

I as thy wife repelled.

*Asan.* Oh, perfect woman!

[They embrace.]

O God, it is too late! Come, let us go;  
The guests are waiting for us. What  
can Fate

Devise to vanquish Love. [Exeunt.]

*Enter two drunken Labourers of Cherson, bearing faggots and straw.*

*1st Lab.* Well, friend, what kind of day has it been with you?

*2nd Lab.* Oh, a white day, a happy day! Plenty of food, plenty of wine, raree shows without end, such processions as were never seen—the very model of a democracy; nothing to pay, and everybody made happy at the expense of the State. I have lived in Cherson, man and boy, for fifty years, and I never saw anything to compare with it. Here's good luck to Lamachus's memory, say I, and I should like to celebrate his lamented decease as often as his daughter likes.

*1st Lab.* Didst know him, citizen?

*2nd Lab.* No, not I. He has been dead these two years. Time he was forgotten, I should think. They don't commemorate poor folk with all these fal-lals and follies.

*1st Lab.* Well, citizen, there is one comfort—the great people don't enjoy themselves as we do. Did you ever see such a set of melancholy, frowning, anxious faces as the grandees carried with them to-day? And as for the Prince and the Lady Gycia, I don't believe they spoke a word the livelong day, though they walked together. That is the way with these grandees. When you and I quarrel with our wives, it is hammer and tongs for five minutes, and then kiss and make friends.

*2nd Lab.* And fancy being drilled by that old fool from Bosphorus—"Most Illustrious, this is your proper place;" "Respectable sir, get you back there" (*mimics MEGACLES*), and so forth.

*1st Lab.* Well, well, it is good to be

content. But I warrant<sup>d</sup> we are the only two unhappy creatures in Cherson to-night, who have the ill fortune to be sober. And such wine too, and nothing to pay!

*2nd Lab.* Never mind, citizen, we shall be paid in meal or malt, I dare say, and we are bound to keep sober. By the way, it is a curiously contrived bonfire this.

*1st Lab.* It will be the crowning triumph of the whole festival, the senator said.

*2nd Lab.* But who ever heard of a bonfire on a large scale like this, so close to an old building? You know our orders: we are to place lines of faggots and straw close to the building on every side, well soaked with oil, and certain sealed vessels full of a secret compound in the midst of them. And just before midnight we are to run with torches and set light to the whole bonfire, to amuse the noble guests at the banquet.

[*IRENE at a window, overhearing.*

*1st Lab.* Ah! do you not see? It is a device of the Senate to startle our friends from Bosphorus. The faggots and straw blaze up fiercely round the wall; then, when all is confusion, the substance in the sealed vessels escapes and at once puts out the fire, and the laugh is with us. Our friends from Bosphorus know what we can do in chemistry before now.

*2nd Lab.* Faith, a right merry device! Ha! ha! What a head thou hast, citizen! Well, we must go on with our work. Lay the faggots evenly.

*Ire. (at the window above).* Great God! what is this?

We are doomed to die!



Good friends

Know you my brother, the Lord Theodorus?

I have something urgent I would say to him.

I will write it down, and you shall give it him

When he comes forth from the banquet.

[*Disappears.*]

1st Lab. Good my lady. Her brother, too, she calls him. I go bail it is her lover, and this is an assignation. Well, well, we poor men must not be too particular.

2nd Lab. No, indeed; but let us get on with our work, or we shall never finish in time.

Ire. (*reappearing*). Here it is. Give it him, I pray, when he comes forth. 'Tis a thing of life and death.

1st Lab. So they all think, Poor love-sick fools!

Ire. See, here is gold for you—'Tis all I have; but he will treble it, If you fail not.

1st Lab. Lady, we shall be here, We must be here. Fear not, we shall not miss him.

## SCENE II.—THE BANQUET HALL.

*At a table, on a dais, ZETHO, ASANDER, GYCIA, and Senators; LYSIMACHUS, and Courtiers of Raspharus. Magnates of Cherson at cross tables. ASANDER, LYSIMACHUS, the Courtiers, and Senators now flushed with wine.*

Zetho. I drink to him whose gracious memory We celebrate to-day. In all our Cherson,

Which boasts descent from the Athenian race,

Who one time swayed the world, there was no man,

Nor ever had been, fired with deeper love

Of this our city, or more heartfelt pride

In our republican rule (*LYSIMACHUS sneers*), which freeborn men

Prize more than life. I do not seek to bind

Those who, long nurtured under kingly rule,

Give to the Man the love we bear the State;

But never shall the name of King be heard

In this our Cherson.

Lys. Archon, 'twere unwise To risk long prophecies.

Bard. Be silent, sir, If you would not offend.

Zetho, I bid you all Drink to the memory of Lamachus And weal to our Republic.

Lys. Shall we drink Its memory, for it has not long to live, If it be still alive?

Bard. It will outlive thee. Thou hast not long to live.

Lys. Longer than thou, If swords be sharp.

Zetho. I pray you, gentlemen, Bandy not angry words.

Gycia. My Lord Asander, Thy cup is empty. Shall I fill it for thee?

Thou lovedst Lamachus?

Asan. Ay, that I did; And I love thee. But I have drunk enough.

I must keep cool to-night.

*Gycia.* Nay; see, I fill  
My glass to drink with thee.

*Asan.* Well, well, I drink,  
But not to the Republic.

*Gycia.* Ah! my lord,  
There is a gulf still yawns 'twixt thee  
and me  
Which not the rapture of recovered love  
Can ever wholly bridge. To my dead  
father

I drink, and the Republic!

*Lys.* Which is dead.

*Bard.* Nay, sir, but living, and  
shall live when thou  
Lie'st rotting with thy schemes.

*Enter MEGACLES.*

*Meg.* My Lord Asander,  
A messenger from Bosphorus, just  
landed,  
Has bid me give thee this.

[*Gives ASANDER letter.*]

*Asan. (reading)* "My Lord, the  
King  
Is dead, asking for thee." Oh,  
wretched day!  
Had I but gone to him, and left this  
place  
Of sorrow ere he died!

*Gycia.* My love, my dear!  
Thou wilt go hence too late. I would  
indeed  
The law had let thee go. Sorrow like  
this  
Draws parted lives in one, and knits  
anew

The rents which time has made.

*Lys.* The King is dead!  
Ay, then long live the King of Bos-  
phorus!

And more are long!

*Bard.* Think you that he will live  
To wear his crown?

*Zetho.* Brethren, the hour is late,  
And draws to midnight, and 'tis time  
that all

Should rest for whom rest is. (*To  
BARDANES aside*) We must con-  
sider

What change of policy this weighty  
change

Which makes Asander King may work  
in us.

*Bard. (aside).* Nay, nay, no change!  
He is a murderer still,

And shall be punished were he thrice  
a king.

*Asan.* Good night to all. And  
thou, good Megacles,  
Thou wert my father's servant, take thy  
rest.

Go hence with these.

*Meg.* I have no heart to marshal  
These dignitaries forth. My King is  
dead;

I am growing old and spent.

*Zetho.* Daughter, remember  
Thy duty to the State.

*Gycia.* I will, good Zetho.  
I am my father's daughter. Gentle  
Sirs

And Ladies all, good night.

[*Exeunt omnes except ASANDER and  
GYCIA; LYSIMACHUS and Cour-  
tiers by one door, then the Cher-  
sonites by another opposite.*]

*Asan.* Dearest of women,  
How well this fair head will become a  
crown!

I know not how it is, but now this blow  
Has fallen, it does not move me as I  
thought.

I am as those who come in tottering  
age

Even to life's verge, whom loss of  
friend or child

Touches not deeply, since the dead  
 they love  
 Precede them but a stage upon the road  
 Which they shall tread to-morrow.  
 Yet am I  
 Young, and thou too, my Gycia ; we  
 should walk  
 The path of life together many years,  
 But that some strange foreboding  
 troubles me.  
 For oh, my dear ! now that the sun of  
 love  
 Beams on our days again, my worth-  
 less life  
 Grows precious, and I tremble like a  
 coward  
 At dangers I despised. Tell me, my  
 Gycia,  
 Though I am true in love, wouldst thou  
 forgive me  
 If I were false or seemed false to thy  
 State ?  
 Hast thou no word for me ? May I  
 not tell thee  
 My secret, which so soon all men shall  
 know,  
 And ask thy pardon for it ?  
*Gycia.* Say on, Asander.  
*Asan.* Know, then, that soldiers  
 sent from Bosphorus  
 Have long time hid within our palace  
 here—  
 Long time before I knew, or I had  
 nipt  
 The treason in the bud ; and in an hour  
 Or less from when we speak, they will  
 go forth,  
 When all the citizens are wrapt in sleep  
 After the toilsome day, and seize the  
 gates,  
 And open to the army which lies hid  
 On board the ships without. They will  
 not shed

The blood of any, since the o'erwhelm-  
 ing force  
 Will make resistance vain. I never  
 liked  
 The plot, I swear to thee ; but, all  
 being done, \*  
 And I a subject, dared not disavow  
 That which was done without me.  
 But I have forced  
 A promise that no blood be spilt.  
*Gycia.* Asander,  
 I have known it all, and have dis-  
 covered all [*ASANDER starts.*  
 Thy secret to the Senate ! But I knew  
 not,  
 Save by the faith that is the twin with  
 love,  
 That thou didst follow only in this  
 plot,  
 And wert unwilling ; and I do rejoice  
 Thy hands are free from blood. But  
 oh, my love,  
 Break from these hateful men ! Thou  
 art now a King,  
 Thou canst command. Come, let us  
 fly together ;  
 There yet is time ! I tell thee that this  
 plot  
 Is doomed to ruin. Ere the morning  
 dawns,  
 All but the guilty leaders will be sent  
 Prisoners to Bosphorus, and thou with  
 them.  
 I have gained this on my knees ; but  
 for the guilty  
 The State has punishments.  
*Asan.* Gycia, thou wouldst not  
 That I should break my faith ? 'Tis a  
 King's part  
 To keep faith, though he die. But  
 when they have seized  
 The city, then, using my kingly office,  
 I will undo the deed, and make alliance

With Cherson, and this done I will  
depart,

Taking my Queen with me.

*Gycia.* Then must I go ;

I cannot live without thee.

*Asan.* Now to rest,

If not to sleep.

*Gycia.* Good night, my love ; fare-  
well.

*Asan.* Nay, not farewell, my love !

*Gycia.* Ah yes, farewell !  
Farewell ! farewell for ever ! [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—OUTSIDE THE BANQUET  
HALL. DARKNESS.

*GYCIA* hurriedly descends the steps,  
closing the great doors of the banquet  
hall softly.

*Gycia.* I hear no sound within ; the  
lights are gone,  
And all the hall is dark. These doors  
alone

Of all the many outlets of the palace  
Remain unlocked. There is not now a  
moment

To lose ere midnight comes, and here I  
hold

The safety of our Cherson. Oh, my  
love !

I could not tell thee all, nor recom-  
pense

Thy faith in me, since duty held me  
fast—

My duty, which should also prove thy  
safety,

For now the solemn promise of the  
State

Is pledged to hold thee harmless, and  
defeat

The shameful plot I knew was never  
thine,

Without one drop of bloodshed. All  
my path

Shows clear as noonday, and I save our  
city

And those who with thee err in inno-  
cence.

Why do I hesitate ? Yet does some dark  
And dreadful presage of impending ill  
So haunt me that I know not how to  
face it.

I dare not do it. I must stay with  
him,

Or bring him forth with me.

[*Ascends the steps, throws open the  
doors, and finds all darkness and  
silence.*]

*Asander ! husband !*

It is thy wife who calls ! Come forth,

*Asander !* [*Listens.*]

Nay, there is no one there. I cannot  
stay ;

This is mere folly. I must keep my  
word ;

There's not a moment's time, or all is  
lost.

Which is the key ?

[*Closes the doors and locks them with  
a clang.*]

I must go forth alone

To the Senate-chamber. I have saved  
our Cherson

And my *Asander !*

[*Totlers down the steps and exit  
hurrially.*]

SCENE IV.—THE SENATE-CHAMBER.

*ZETHO and Senators ; afterwards  
GYCIA.*

*Zetho.* What is the hour ?

*Bardanes.* It wants five minutes only  
To midnight. Think you she will come ?

*Zetho.* I know her.  
She is the soul of honour, and would  
keep  
Her word if 'twere her death.

*Bard.* But would she keep it  
If 'twere her lover's?

*Zetho.* She thinks not that it is,  
Nor should it be, indeed, were we but  
true  
As I believe her.

*Bard.* True! There is no truth  
In keeping faith with murderers; they  
must perish  
In the same net which they laid  
privily  
Against a faithful city.

*Enter GYCIA, tottering in, with the keys.*

*Zetho.* Hail, noble daughter! Thou  
hast saved the State.  
I knew thou wouldst not fail us.

*Gycia.* See, good Zetho,  
The proof that I have done my part to  
you.

There are the master keys of all the  
doors

Within the palace. When I closed the  
last,

A few brief minutes since, there was no  
sound

Nor light in hall or chamber; every  
court

Was silent as the grave.

*Bard.* Ay, as the grave  
It is, or will be soon.

*Gycia.* What mean you, sir,  
I pray you? I am but a timid woman,  
Full of foreboding fears and dread of  
ill,

And such a doubt doth overspread my  
soul,

Hearing thy words, I think I shall go  
mad.

Nay, Zetho, he is safe; I have your  
promise

Thou wouldst not harm him. An o'er-  
whelming force,

Thou saidst, should so surround them  
that resistance

Were vain, and ere the dawn they  
should go hence

Without one drop of bloodshed.

*Zetho.* Ay, my daughter,  
Such was the promise.

*Bard.* And it will be kept.  
[*Bell strikes midnight.*

Hark, 'tis the hour! An overwhelming  
force

[*A red glare rising higher and higher  
is seen through the windows of the  
Senate-chamber. Confused noises  
and shouts heard without.*

Surrounds them, but no drop of blood  
is shed.

All will go hence ere dawn.

*Gycia.* Oh, cruel man,  
And most perfidious world! Oh, my  
Asander!

To die thus and through me!

[*A violent knocking is heard at the  
door.*

*Enter THEODORUS in great agitation,  
and IRENE, who throws herself on her  
knees, weeping. GYCIA falls swooning  
in ZETHO'S arms.*

*Zetho.* Whence com'st thou, Theo-  
dorus?

*Theo.* Straight, my lord,  
From Gycia's palace.

*Zetho.* Say, what didst thou there?  
And what of horror has befallen thee  
That makes thine eyes stare thus?

*Theo.* Most noble Zetho,  
When from the banquet scarce an hour  
ago

I passed, came one who offered me a  
     letter  
 And bade me read. 'Twas from this  
     woman here,  
 My sister, and it told of some great  
     peril  
 By fire, which she, within the prison  
     locked,  
 Expected with the night. Wherefore I  
     sped  
 With one I trusted, and did set a  
     ladder  
 Against her casement, calling her by  
     name,  
 And bidding her descend. But no  
     voice came,  
 And all was dark and silent as the  
     grave;  
 And when I called again, the Prince  
     Asander,  
 From an adjacent casement looking,  
     cried,  
 "I had forgot thy sister. Take her  
     hence;  
 She should go free!" And then, at  
     her own casement  
     [GYCIA revives and listens.  
 Appearing, he came forth, and in his  
     arms  
 A woman's senseless form. As they  
     descended  
 And now were in mid-air, there came  
     the sound  
 Of the bell striking midnight, and forth-  
     with  
 In a moment, like a serpent winged with  
     fire,  
 There rose from wall to wall a sheet of  
     flame,  
 Which in one instant mounted to the  
     roof  
 With forked red tongues. Then every  
     casement teemed  
 With strange armed men; who leapt  
     into the flames  
 And perished. Those who, maimed  
     and burnt, escaped,  
 Ere they could gain their feet, a little  
     band  
 Of citizens, who sprang from out the  
     night,  
 Slew as they lay. The Prince, who  
     bore my sister  
 Unhurt to ground, stood for a moment  
     mute.  
 Then, seeing all was lost, he with a  
     groan  
 Stabbed himself where we stood. I  
     fear his hurt  
 Is mortal, since in vain I tried to  
     staunch  
 The rushing blood; then bade them on  
     a litter  
 Carry him hither gently. Here he  
     comes.  
  
*Enter Citizens, bearing ASANDER on a  
 litter, wounded.*  
 Gycia. Oh, my love, thou art hurt!  
     Canst thou forgive me?  
 I thought to save thee and the rest. I  
     knew not,  
 I did not know: Oh, God!  
     Asan. I do believe thee.  
 The fates have led our feet by luckless  
     ways  
 Which only lead to death. I loved but  
     thee.  
 I wished thy State no wrong, but I am  
     dying.  
 Farewell! my love, farewell! [*Dies.*  
 Gycia. Oh, my lost love!  
 [*Throws herself on the body and kisses  
 it passionately.*  
 Zetho. Poor souls! Mysterious are  
     the ways of Heaven,

And these have suffered deeply in the  
fortune  
That bound their lives together.

*Rard.* That dead man  
Would have betrayed our State, and  
thou dost pity !  
So perish all the enemies of Cher-  
son !

*Gycia (rising).* Nay, sir, be silent.  
'Tis a coward's part  
To vilify the dead. You, my Lord  
Zetho,  
I had your promise that you would hurt  
me

Except the guilty only, and I thought  
That to your word I might entrust my  
life  
And one more dear than mine ; but now  
it seems

That in some coward and unreasoning  
panic  
This worthy Senator has moved his  
colleagues—

Since cruelty is close akin to fear—  
To break your faith to me, and to con-  
fuse

The innocent and guilty, those who  
led

And those who followed, in one dread-  
ful death !

I pray you pardon me if, being a  
woman,

Too rashly taking part in things of  
State,

I have known nought of State-craft or  
the wisdom

Which breaks a plighted word.

*Zetho.* Daughter, I would  
Our promise had been kept, and I had  
kept it

But that the safety of the State to  
some

Seemed to demand its breach.

*Gycia.* Farewell, good Zetho,  
And all who were my friends. I am  
going hence ;

I can no longer stay. There lies my  
love.

There flames my father's house. I go  
far off,

A long, long journey. If you see me  
not

In life again, I humbly pray the  
State

May, if it think me worthy—for in-  
deed

I have given it all—bury me, when I  
die,

Within the city, in a fair white  
tomb,

As did our Grecian forefathers of  
old

For him who saved the State ; and, if  
it may be,

Lay my love by my side.

*Zetho and Sens.* Daughter, we swear  
That thou shalt have thy wish.

*Gycia.* I thank you, sirs.  
Then, I may go. Kiss me, good  
Theodorus :

I am no more a wife. I know thy  
love,

And thank thee for it. For that wretch  
whose lie

Has wrecked our life and love, I bless  
the gods

That I am childless, lest my daughter  
grew

As vile a thing as she ; and yet I know  
not.

She loved him in some sort, poor wretch,  
poor wretch !

But now I must be going. 'Tis past  
midnight ;

[*Snatches a dagger from THEODO-  
RUS's side.*

I must go hence. I have lost my life  
and love,

But I have saved the State.

*[Stabs herself and falls on ASANDER'S  
body.]*

*Citizens of Cherson bursting in.*

*Cits.* The State is saved! Long  
may our Cherson flourish!

The State is saved! Long live our  
Lady Gycia,

Who saved the State!

*Gycia (rising a little).* Yes, I have  
saved the State!

*[Falls back dead.]*

*Citizens (without).* Long live the  
Lady Gycia!

*Curtain.*

## SONGS OF BRITAIN.

### ON A THRUSH SINGING IN AUTUMN.

SWEET singer of the Spring, when the  
new world

Was filled with song and bloom, and  
the fresh year

Tripped, like a lamb playful and void  
of fear,

Through daisied grass and young leaves  
scarce unfurled,

Where is thy liquid voice

That all day would rejoice?

Where now thy sweet and homely call,  
Which from gray dawn to evening's

chilling fall

Would echo from 'thin copse and  
tangled brake,

For homely duty tuned and love's sweet  
sake?

The spring-tide passed, high summer  
soon should come.

The woods grew thick, the meads a  
deeper hue;

The pipper growths swelled, lush  
and tall;

The sharp scythes swept at daybreak  
through the dew.

Thou didst not heed at all,

Thy prodigal voice grew dumb;

No more with song mightst thou be-  
guile,

She sitting on her speckled eggs the  
while,

Thy mate's long vigil as the slow days  
went,

Solacing her with lays of measureless  
content.

Nay, nay, thy voice was Duty's, nor  
would dare

Sing were Love fled, though still the  
world were fair;

The summer waxed and waned, the  
nights grew cold,

The sheep were thick within the wattled  
fold,

The woods began to moan,

Dumb wert thou and alone;

Yet now, when leaves are sere, thy  
ancient note

Comes low and halting from thy doubt-  
ful throat.



Oh, lonely loveless voice, what dost  
thou here  
In the deep silence of the fading year?

Thus do I read the answer of thy song :  
"I sang when winds blew chilly all  
day long ;

I sang because hope came and joy was  
near,

I sang a little while, I made good cheer ;  
In summer's cloudless day  
My music died away ;

But now the hope and glory of the year  
Are dead and gone, a little while I sing  
Songs of regret for days no longer here,  
And touched with presage of the far-  
off Spring."

Is this the meaning of thy note, fair  
bird?

Or do we read into thy simple brain  
Echoes of thoughts which human hearts  
have stirred,

High-soaring joy and melancholy pain?  
Nay, nay, that lingering note  
Belated from thy throat—

"Regret," is what it sings, "regret,  
regret!

The dear days pass, but are not wholly  
gone.

In praise of those I let my song go on ;  
'Tis sweeter to remember than forget."

### IN A COUNTRY CHURCH.

The organ peals, the people stand,  
The white procession through the aisles,  
As is our modern use, defiles  
In ranks, which part on either hand.

They chant the psalms with resonant  
voice

These peasants of our Saxon Kent ;

With the old Hebrew king rejoice,  
With him grow contrite and repent.

But when the pale priest, blandly cold,  
White-winged above the eagle bends,  
I lose the ancient words of old,  
The monotone which still ascends.

For there the village school is set,  
A row of shining faces bright,  
Round cheeks by time unwrinkled yet,  
Smooth heads, and boyish collars white.

And through the row there runs a smile,  
Like sunlight on a rippling sea—  
A childish mirth, devoid of guile ;  
What may the merry movement be?

The teachers frown ; not far to seek  
The wonder seems, for it is this :  
A little scholar whose round cheek  
A stain of gules appears to kiss.

For some low shaft of wintry sun  
Strikes where Dame Dorothy of the  
Grange,  
In long devotions never done,  
Kneels on through centuries of change ;

And from her robe's unfading rose,  
Athwart the fair heads ranged below,  
A ruddy shaft at random goes,  
And lights them with unwonted glow.

And straightway all the scene but  
these

Grows dim for me ; I heed no more  
The preacher's smooth monotones,  
The chants repeated o'er and o'er.

For I am borne on fancy's wings  
Far from the Present to the Past ;

From those which pass to those which  
last,  
The root and mystery of Things.

How many an old and vanished day,  
Has gone, she kneeling there the while,  
And watching, with her saintly smile,  
The generations fade away.

The children came each Sunday there  
To hear the self-same chant and hymn ;  
The boys grew strong, the girls grew  
fair,  
Their lives with fleeting years grew dim.

Their 'children's children came and  
went,  
She kneeling in the self-same prayer ;  
They passed to withered age, and bent,  
And left the Lady kneeling there.

They passed, and on the churchyard  
ground  
No more their humble names are seen ;  
Only upon the billowy mound  
Yearly the untrodden grass grows green.

They grew, they waned through toil  
and strife,  
From innocence to guilt and sin ;  
They gained what prize was theirs to  
win,  
They sank in shame the load of life.

And still the kneeling Lady calm  
Throws gales on many a childish head,  
And still the self-same prayers are said,  
The self-same chant, the self-same  
psalm.

So had they been, before as yet,  
Her far-off grandfathers lived and died,  
Ere long descent had nourished pride,  
Before the first Plantagenet.

No change, unless some change there  
were

In simpler rite or grayer stone,  
The self-same worship never done,  
And for its very age grown fair.

Great God, the creatures of Thy hand,  
Must they thus fail for ever still  
Thy high behests to understand,  
To seek and find Thy hidden will ?

Are Thy hands slow to succour then ?  
And are Thy eyes, then, slow to see  
The toiling, tempted race of men  
Born into sin and misery ?

For nineteen centuries of Time,  
Nay more, for dim unnumbered years,  
Men's eyes have sought Thy face  
sublime,  
And turned uncomforted, in tears.

For countless years unsullied youth  
Has sunk through grosser mire of  
sense ;  
And yet men cherish innocences !  
And yet we are no nearer truth !

And not the less from age to age  
Heavenward the unchanging suffrage  
rolls  
From hearts inspired by holy rage,  
And meek and uncomplaining souls,

Who see no cloud of doubt o'erspread  
The far horizons of the sky,  
But view with clear, unfailing eye  
The mansions of the happy dead.

Oh, wonder ! oh, perplexed thought !  
Oh, interchange of good and ill !  
In vain, by life's long pain untaught,  
We strive to solve the riddle still.

In vain, so mixed the twofold skein,  
That none the tangle may unwind ;  
Where one the gate of Heaven may  
    find,  
Another shrinks in hopeless pain.

So here the immemorial sum  
Of simple reverence may breed  
A finer worship than might come  
For fruit of some severer creed.

Kneel, Lady, blazoned in thy place !  
Through generations children kneel.  
To know is weaker than to feel :  
Though Truth seem far, we know her  
    face !

#### IN SPRING-TIDE.

THIS is the hour, the day,  
The time, the season sweet.  
Quick ! hasten, laggard feet,  
Brook not delay ;  
Love flies, youth passes, Maytide will  
    not last ;  
Forth, forth, while yet 'tis time, before  
the Spring is past.

The Summer's glories shine  
From all her garden ground,  
With lilies pranked around,  
And roses fine ;  
But the pink blooms or white upon the  
    burning trees,  
Primrose and violet sweet, what charm  
    has June like these ?

This is the time of song.  
From many a joyous throat,  
Mute all the dull year long,  
Soars love's clear note ;

Summer is dumb, and faint with dust  
and heat ;  
This is the mirthful time when every  
    sound is sweet.

Fair day of large light,  
Life's own appointed hour,  
Young souls bud forth in white --  
The world's a-flower ;  
Thrill, youthful heart ; soar upward,  
limpid voice ;  
Blossoming time is come—rejoice, re-  
    joice, rejoice !

#### IN AUTUMN.

"DECAY, decay," the wildering west  
    winds cry,  
"Decay, decay," the moaning woods  
    reply ;  
The whole dead autumn landscape,  
drear and chill,  
Strikes the same chord of desolate sad-  
    ness still.  
The drifting clouds, the floods a sullen  
    sea,  
The dead leaves whirling from the  
    ruined tree,  
The rain which falling soaks the sodden  
    way,  
Proclaim the parting summer's swift  
    decay.  
No song of bird, nor joyous sight or thing,  
Which smooths the wintry forefront of  
    the spring ;  
No violet lurking in its mossy bed,  
Nor drifted snow-bloom bending over-  
    head,  
Nor kingcups carpeting the meads with  
    gold,  
Nor tall spiked orchids purpling all the  
    wold ;

But thin dull herbage which no more  
may grow,  
And dry reeds rustling as the chill  
winds blow,  
Bleak hillsides whence the huddled  
flocks are fled,  
And every spear of crested grass lies  
dead.  
"Decay, decay," the leafless woodlands  
sigh,  
The torpid earth, and all the blinded  
sky,  
And down the blurred moor, 'mid the  
dying day,  
An age-worn figure limps its weary way.

*A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S  
DREAM.*

FAR in the west sinks down the Sun  
On bars of violet and gold,  
A soft breeze springs up fresh and  
cold,  
And darkness a transparent pall  
Upon the waiting earth begins to fall,  
And, decked with lucent gems of orbéd  
light,  
Walks forth the sable Night,  
And once again the unfailing miracle is  
done.

Ineffable, illimitable, immense,  
Wonder of wonders, mystery of Space,  
How can a finite vision meet thy face?  
How shall not our poor eyes, dazzled  
and dim,  
Which see but thy vast circle's outward  
rim,  
Sink touched before thy gaze with im-  
potence?  
How shall our feeble voices dare to  
hymn

Thy infinite glories—voices which were  
best  
To mortal loves and earth's poor joys  
address?  
How seek our earthly limits to trans-  
cend,  
And, without halt or pause,  
Soaring beyond the limit of our laws,  
Touch with a feeble hand on glories  
without end?

Nay, great are these indeed  
And infinite, but not so great as He  
Their Maker who has formed them,  
who made me,  
Who can in fancy leap, outward and  
outward still  
Beyond our System and its farthest star,  
Beyond the greater Systems ranged afar,  
To which our faintest suns are satellites,  
and no more—  
Beyond, beyond, beyond, and strive to fill  
The illimitable void which never sense  
Nor thought alone may compass or  
contain,  
Then with a whirling brain  
Return to the great Centre of all light,  
Which doth control and bound the  
Infinite,  
And, looking to the undiscovered Sun,  
Find all perplexity and longing done,  
And am content to wonder and to adore.

This 'tis alone  
Which doth console and soothe our  
feeble thought,  
Faint with the too great strain to com-  
prehend  
A Universe, which owns nor source nor  
end.  
Wherever through the boundless wastes  
we stray,  
For ever and for ever, some faint ray

Of the great central Sun, the hidden  
Will,  
Attends our wanderings still ;  
Beyond the utmost limits of the sky,  
Unseen, yet seen, the gaze of an Eternal  
Eye.

No waste of systems lies around,  
But a great Rule by which all things  
are bound.

A changeless order circles sun with sun ;  
One great Will pulses through, and  
makes them one.

System on system, vast or small,  
One great Intelligence directs them all.  
No longer from the endless maze we  
shrink,

Like those who on some sea-cliff's  
dreadful brink

Long to fling down into the empty air  
And lose the pain of living, and to be  
Sunk in the deep abysses of the sea ;  
To lose the pain of living and the care,  
Which dogs life like its shadow.

Nay, no dread  
Have we who know a great Sun over-  
head,

Which shines upon us always, unbeheld.  
How should our eyes behold what is  
too great

our imperfect state ?

How should our minds reach to it ;  
how attain

With a too feeble brain,  
To comprehend the Unbounded, the  
Immense,

Incomprehensible by finite sense ?—  
How through the Finite view the  
Infinite,

Except by this clear Light ?

That is the light, indeed,  
Which lights all souls which come upon  
the earth.

That is the central Sun which on our  
birth

Shone, and will shine upon us till the  
end ;

A central Will which holds the worlds  
in space ;

A Presence, though we look not on its  
face,

Which sows a cosmic order through the  
waste of things ;

A Being, all the beatings of whose wings  
Are secular wastes of Time ; of whose  
great soul

Creations are but moods, in whose vast  
mind

Antinomies of Thought repose com-  
bined,

Till those which seem to us as change-  
less laws

Show but as phases of the Unchanging  
Cause,

And we and all things fade and pass  
away,

Lost in the effulgence of the Boundless  
Day.

Let, then, unbounded Space,  
Sown thick with worlds, encompass us ;  
we care

No whit for it, nor shall our dazzled eyes  
This waste of Worlds surprise,  
Which have looked on its Maker, who  
is more

Than all his work can be, but not the  
less

Dwells in each human soul that looks  
on Him

Albeit with vision dim ;

Whose constant Presence all our lives  
confess,

Of whom we are a part, and closer far  
Than is the furthest, most unmeasured  
star,

Than are His great suns, big with  
fruitful strife,  
Seeing that we are a portion of His  
Life,  
Seeing that we hold His Essence—  
some clear spark,  
Which shines when all creation else  
grows dark,  
And are, however impotent and small,  
One with the Will that made and  
governs all.

\* \* \* \*

And now the night grows thin ;  
A subtle air of newness seems to stir  
Before the dawn, as if its harbinger  
To prisoned souls within,  
Proclaiming the near coming of the day.  
Then Darkness, a great bird, with raven  
wing,  
Flies to the furthest west, and in her  
stead  
Young Day, an orient conqueror over-  
head,  
Looks down, and all that waste of  
worlds has fled ;  
And once again the Eternal, mystic  
Birth  
Is born upon the earth,  
And once again the round of whole-  
some life,  
The doubt-dispelling stir and joyous  
strife,  
Chases the dreadful visions of the night,  
Lost in the increasing light ;  
And from the spheres a still voice seems  
to say,  
"Awake, arise, adore, behold the Day !  
It is enough to be, nor question why ;  
It is enough to work our work and die ;  
It is enough to feel and not to know.  
Behold, the Dawn is breaking ; let us  
go."

## AN ENGLISH IDYLL.

ONCE I remember, in a far-off June,  
Leaving the studious cloister of my  
youth,  
Beside the young Thames' stream I laid  
me down,  
Wearied, upon a bank. 'Twas mid-  
summer ;  
The warm earth teemed with flowers ;  
the kingcup's gold,  
The perfumed clover, 'mid the crested  
grass,  
The plantains rearing high their flowery  
crowns  
Above the daisied coverts ; overhead,  
The hawthorns, white and rosy, bent  
with bloom,  
The broad-spread chestnuts spiked  
with frequent flowers,  
And white gold-hearted lilies on the  
stream ;  
All these made joy within my heart,  
and woke  
The fair idyllic phantasies of Greece ;  
And dreaming, well content with the  
rich charm  
Of summer England, long I idly mused :  
"And were the deep-set vales of Thes-  
saly  
Or fair Olympian beech-groves more  
than this ?  
Or the Sicilian meads more rich in  
flowers,  
Where the lost goddess plucked the  
asphodel ?  
Or flowed the clear stream through a  
lovelier shade  
Where Dian bathed and rapt Actæon  
saw ?  
Or were they purer depths where Hyllas  
played

Till the nymphs drew him down? Ah,  
 fairer dreams  
 Than our poor England holds! Grave,  
 toil-worn land!  
 Poor aged mother of a graceless brood,  
 With shambling gait and limbs by  
 labour bent!

What should she know of such?"

When straight I heard  
 A ripple of boyish mirth, and looking  
 saw

Far off along the meads a gliding boat  
 Float noiselessly; lithe forms at either  
 end—

The self-same forms which Phidias fixed  
 of old—

With tall poles, pressed it forward,  
 others lay

Reclined, and all had crowned their  
 short smooth hair

With lilies from the stream, while one  
 had shaped

Some hollow reed in semblance of a  
 pipe,

Making a shrill faint sound—a joyous  
 crew,

Clothed with the grace of innocent  
 nakedness.

Then, while they yet were far, ere yet  
 a sound

Of their poor rustic tones assailed the  
 sense,

Or too great nearness marred the grace  
 of form—

Poised sudden in a white row, side by  
 side,

They plunged down headlong in the  
 sweet warm tide.

Then, as I went, within myself I  
 said,

"The young Apollo is not wholly  
 fled,

Nor can long centuries of toil and care  
 Make youth less comely or the earth  
 less fair.

To the world's ending Joy and Grace  
 shall be.

I, too, have been to-day in Arcady."

### ANIMA MUNDI.

Oh great World-Spirit, wherefore art  
 thou come?

We crave an answer, but thy voice is  
 dumb.

Oh great World-Spirit, whither dost  
 thou tend?

By what dark paths to what mysterious  
 end?

We do not know, we cannot tell at  
 all,

Only before thy onward march we  
 fall.

\* \* \* \*

Nay, but before thy throne we fall, we  
 kneel;

We crave not that thy face thou shouldst  
 reveal;

We do not seek to know, only to feel.

We praise thee not in words our tongues  
 can tell;

Though thy hand slay us, we will not  
 rebel.

Whate'er thy will design for us, 'tis well.

Compute our lives with all thy bound-  
 less past,

Project them on thy abysmal Future  
 vast;

Only let all be merged in Thee at last.

IN PEMBROKESHIRE, 1886.

THROUGH crested grass I took my way  
From my loved home. The sun was  
high ;  
The warm air slept the live-long day ;  
No shadowy cloudlet veiled the sky.

The swift train swept with rhythmic  
tune,  
By endless pastures hurrying down,  
White farm, lone chapel, castled town,  
Then, fringed with weed, the salt lagoon.

And last the land-locked haven blue,  
Thin-sown with monstrous works of  
war,  
And on the sweet salt air I knew  
Faint sounds of cheering from afar.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Strong arms and backs are bent, and  
then  
They draw us up the fluttering street ;  
Behind, there comes the ordered beat  
Of long-drawn files of marching men.

At last a halt ; a steep hillside  
Set thick with toil-worn workers strong,  
Grave faces stretching far and wide,  
Fired with the hope to banish wrong.

Ah me ! how thin one voice appears,  
To reach so many eager minds !  
Nay, for it speaks to willing ears,  
And what the hearer seeks he finds.

Unhappy Island of the West !  
Thy brethren these in race and blood,  
Not like thee tempted or oppressed,  
But filled with longing for thy good.

For just is manhood rude and strong  
And generous the toiler's soul ;

When these the ship of State control,  
Oppression shall not flourish long.

\* \* \* \* \*  
The crowds are gone, the hillside bare,  
The last good-nights at length are said,  
The harbour crossed again, the fair  
Large star of eve hangs overhead.

The shades of tardy evening fall ;  
Lights come in casements here and  
there ;  
Through dewy meads on the cool air  
The wandering landrails hoarsely call.

The silent roads loom ghostly white ;  
No veil of darkness hides the skies ;  
A sunless dawn appears to rise  
Upon the stilly charmed night.

The day's hot concourse comes to seem  
Far, far away ; the eager crowd,  
The upturned gaze, the plaudits loud,  
In the cool silence like a dream.

And oh, sweet odours, which the air  
Of the calm summer midnight deep  
Draws from the rose which lies asleep,  
And bowery honeysuckles fair.

Oh, perfumed night ! Some tremulous  
bird  
From the thick hedgerows seems to  
thrill.

No other sound but this is heard,  
Save ringing horsehoofs, beating still.

Midnight is past ; there comes a gleam,  
Precursor of the scarce-set sun.  
Through gray streets hushed as in a  
dream

We sweep, and the long day is done.

\* \* \* \* \*



Men pass, but still shall Nature keep  
Her night's cool calm, her dawn's  
bright glow ;  
Unseen her fragrant wild flowers creep,  
Unmarked her midnight odours blow.

The long injustices of years  
Shall pass ; the hapless Western Isle  
Shall dry the age-long trace of tears,  
And show instead a happy smile.

The wheels of Fate are swiftly borne  
From point to point, from change to  
change ;  
What yesterday was new and strange ;  
To-morrow scouts as old and worn.

I may forget the shouting crowd,  
The sea of eyes which upward turn,  
The kindling cheeks, the plaudits loud,  
The sympathies which glow and burn.

Ay, all things change, but hardly those  
Shall fade—the midnight calm of June,  
The cool sweet airs, the night-bird's  
tune,  
The perfume of the sleeping rose.

### EASTER-TIDE.

AWAKE, arise, oh Earth !  
Thy hour has come at last ;  
The winter's ruin past,  
Spring comes to birth.  
The virgin world with flowers again  
grows bright,  
And in the increasing light  
Doth clothe herself with beauty ; once  
again  
A new creation issues with a stately  
train.

Oh soul of man, arise  
And keep thy Easter-tide,  
White clothed as is a bride,  
With calm pure eyes ;  
When all things living else rejoice,  
Not thine should be the voice  
Alone to keep dull silence, mute, un-  
heard,  
Amid the joy that wakens every nest-  
ing bird.

'Tis an old Spring of mirth  
That bids our souls arise ;  
No other moved the priests and  
augurs wise  
Upon the younger earth  
When for the Passover the lamb was  
slain,  
Nor when they did complain  
Of old time for the fair Adonis dead,  
Greeting with tears of joy that dear  
recovered head.

The same, yet not the same,  
Joy fuller, deeper grief  
Than in the old ages came  
To wake belief.  
The Spring our voices celebrate to-day  
Is not the Spring which fades with  
May,  
Nor that renewal ours which shall be  
done  
Soon as our earth leans outward from  
the averted sun.

Nor as theirs is our loss  
Who wept the enamoured boy ;  
Ours is a heavier cross,  
A livelier joy,  
Mixed in such sort with grief that one  
is bred  
From the other and by it nourished,

So that without the salutary pain  
Were no place left for this triumphant  
gain.

Great Law of Sacrifice  
On which our lives are built,  
That with our load of guilt  
Soars to the skies,  
I doubt if ever there was race of man  
But based its life on such a mystic plan,  
From old Prometheus' godlike treachery  
To calm Osiris cold and sad Persephone.

Therefore, because the end  
Of Winter comes and Death,  
Our yearning souls ascend,  
Faith quickeneth.  
How should it be that man alone could  
cease  
When all things else increase?  
Man, the first fruit of Time, Creation's  
crown—  
Shall he, while all is Spring, lie hope-  
less and cast down?

Ay, always with the Spring  
The waking comes again;  
Mixed tones of joy and pain  
Our life-chords sing.  
Sweet are the songs of autumn, sweet  
of death,  
And bitter sweet the first-drawn breath,  
And sweet, though full of pain, the  
mortal strife  
When from Death's grasp we struggle  
into Life.

That is the law of life—  
Joy bought by sacrifice,  
Pleasure for hopeless sighs,  
And rest for strife.  
The earth is no more, as it was at first,  
By some strange spell accurst;

A mystery has passed a mystery,  
A boundless hope has bid new heavens  
and earth to be.

Rise, happy Earth, arise,  
Thy wintry darkness done,  
To greet the new-risen sun  
Oh soul, arise!  
The joy which stirs the world let it  
wake thee.  
A symbol of thy risen life is born.  
Awake, arise! this is the very morn;  
A mystery has been! a mystery!

## GHOSTS.

SOMETIMES in some forsaken place,  
Hid from the aspect of the sun,  
We come on some forgotten trace  
Of life and years long dead and done.

Some faded picture's doubtful truth,  
Fixed in the springtime of our days,  
Which through all change of mien  
portrays  
The evanescent charm of youth—

The rounded cheek, the wealth of hair,  
The bright young eye's unclouded  
blue.

White head, wan face, were you thus fair?  
Sad eyes, and were these ever you?

Changed, and yet still unchanged  
through change,  
The self-same lives for good or ill,  
Thin ghosts with features known, yet  
strange,  
Of us who live and travail still.

Thin ghosts! or is it we who fade  
And are deceased, and keep no more

Than some thin unsubstantial shade  
Of the young hopes and fears of yore?

Who knows what Life, or Death, or  
Time

Are in themselves, or whither tend  
The great world's footsteps slow,  
sublime,

From what dim source—to what  
hidden end?

Or if our growth be but decay,  
Or if all Life must wax and grow,  
Or if no change true Being know,  
Though all things outward pass  
away?

Ah! not in outward things we know  
The chiefest work of Time and  
Change;  
But new faiths come, old thoughts  
grown strange,  
Old longings which no more may  
glow.

Some time-stained sheaf of youthful  
verse,  
Some inarticulate yearning dumb,  
Once dear, ere time and age had come  
To turn the better to the worse.

In these the gazer starts to see  
A self, not his, reflected most,  
And asking, "Were these part of  
me?"

Knows he has looked upon a ghost.

SONG.

LOVE took my life and thrilled it  
Through all its strings,  
Played round my mind and filled it  
With sound of wings,  
But to my heart he never came  
To touch it with his golden flame.

Therefore it is that singing  
I do rejoice,  
Nor heed the slow years bringing  
A harsher voice,  
Because the songs which he has sung  
Still leave the untouched singer young.

But whom in fuller fashion  
The Master sways,  
For him, swift winged with passion,  
Fleet the brief days.  
Betimes the enforced accents come,  
And leave him ever after dumb.

FROM WILD WALES.

I.

LLYN Y MORWYNION.

By fair Festiniog, 'mid the Northern  
Hills,  
The vales are full of beauty, and the  
heights,  
Thin-set with mountain sheep, show  
stateller far

Than in the tamer South. There the  
stern round  
Of labour rules,—a silent land, some-  
times  
Loud with the blast that buffets all the  
hills  
Whereon the workers toil, in quarries  
hewn  
Upon the terraced rock-sides. Tied on  
tier,

Above the giddy depths, they edge and  
cling  
Like flies to the sheer precipice as they  
strike  
The thin cleft slate. For solace of  
their toil  
Song comes to strengthen them, and  
songlike verse  
In the old Cymric measures, and the  
dream  
Of fame when all the listening thousands  
round  
Are ranged in Session, and the rapt  
array  
Expectant of the singer's soaring voice,  
Or full quire rising thund'rous to the  
skies,  
The sheathed swords, and the sacred  
Chair of oak,  
Where sits the Bard. But most of all  
they prize  
Old memories of the Past, forgotten  
feuds,  
And battles long ago. One tale they  
tell  
Of a deep tarn upon the mountain side,  
Llyn y Morwynion called, — "The  
Maidens' Lake ;"  
And thus it is the fair old story runs.

---

On Arvon once the men of Meirion,  
Being alone, nor having hearth or home,  
Swooped down when all her warriors  
were afield  
Against the foemen. And they snatched  
from them  
The flower of all the maidens of the  
race,  
And to their mountain fastness far away  
Bare them unchecked. There with  
great care and love

They tended them, and in the captives'  
hearts  
The new observance slowly ousted all  
The love of home and country, till they  
stayed  
Content, forgetting all their lives before,  
Parents and kinsfolk, everything but  
love.

But when the war was ended, and  
their arms  
Set free, the men of Arvon sent demand  
That they should straight restore to  
home and kin  
The maidens they had rapt. Then  
came great doubt  
Upon the men of Meirion, knowing well  
Their strength too weak to match the  
Arvonian hosts  
In unassisted war ; heralds they sent  
To Arvon asking peace, making amends  
For what had been their fault. But the  
others nursed  
Deep anger in their hearts, and to their  
words  
Made only answer, " Give ye back un-  
touched  
Our daughters and our sisters, whom  
your fraud  
Has stolen from us, or prepare to  
die."  
Then they, taking deep counsel with  
themselves,  
Swore not for life itself would they  
return  
The women, only if themselves should  
will  
To leave them ; and they made request  
of them  
That they might know their wish. But  
when they sought  
To question them, they answered with  
one voice—

"We will not go; for barren is the  
 lot  
 Of maidenhood, and cold the weary fate  
 Of loveless lives, the household tasks  
 whose weight  
 Bears down the childless woman. Since  
 we came  
 We have known life in the full light of  
 home.  
 Say to our sires and brothers, that we  
 stay  
 Willing, and bid our young men that  
 they wive  
 From out some noble tribe; for thus  
 it is  
 Our Cymric race grows strong. But do  
 ye bid  
 Our mothers comfort them, for they  
 shall take  
 Their grandsons on their knees; for we  
 are wed  
 And cannot more return. Not Fate  
 itself  
 Can e'er recall the irrevocable Past."

But when the men of Arvon heard  
 the hest  
 The herald brought, their souls were  
 wroth in them  
 Against the ravishers, whose cunning  
 wiles  
 Had worked such wrong. They called  
 their warriors forth  
 From every hill and dale, and marched  
 in haste  
 To Meirion. And they summoned  
 them to yield,  
 But they refused; and so the fight was  
 set  
 For the morrow, on the margin of a  
 mere  
 Deep down within the circuit of the  
 hills.

There, with the sun, within a close-  
 set pass  
 The men of Meirion stood, a scanty  
 band,  
 Waiting the approaching host. With  
 grief and pain  
 They left their loves, and swift, with  
 breaking day,  
 Marched with unfaltering steps, with-  
 out a word,  
 To the field of honour, as men go who  
 know  
 That all beside is lost. But as they  
 stood,  
 Ranged in stern silence, waiting for the  
 fray,  
 They saw a white procession thread the  
 pass  
 Behind, now seen, now lost, by flowery  
 bends,  
 Gorse gold and heather purple. At  
 their head  
 Blodeuwedd, she the flower in face and  
 form  
 By magic formed, by magic art fore-  
 doomed  
 To sin and suffer. Then again they  
 knew  
 The bitterness of death, and clasped  
 once more  
 The forms they loved, when by the lake  
 the sun  
 Lit the fierce light of countless marching  
 spears.

Then with a last embrace the tearful  
 throng  
 Withdrew to where above the fastness  
 rose  
 A purple slope. No way the assailing  
 host  
 Might find to it while yet one stalwart  
 arm

Of Meirion lived. Toward the lake it  
fell,  
Till in a sheer, precipitous cliff it sank,  
Its base in the unfathomable deep.

Now, while the maidens like a fleece  
of cloud  
Whitened the hill, or like a timid flock  
From nearer danger shrinking, swift  
there came  
Along the grassy margin of the lake  
The countless spears of Arvon. And  
their sires  
And brethren saw them, and great wrath  
and joy  
Fired them and urged them onward, till  
they surged  
And broke on Meirion. But her strong  
sons stood  
And flung them backward; and the  
frightened throng  
Of white-robed suppliants saw the deed,  
and feared,  
Hiding their eyes, hovering 'twixt hope  
and fear,  
Divided 'twixt their lovers and their  
kin.

All day the battle raged, from morn  
to eve;  
All day the men of Arvon charged and  
broke,  
And charged again the little band which  
stood  
Unshaken in the pass, but hourly grew  
Weaker and weaker still. But at the  
last  
The noise of battle ceased awhile; the  
shouts,  
The cries, grew silent. On the purple  
hill  
The kneeling women saw the Arvonian  
host

Retreating with their dead, and rose to  
go  
With succour to their lovers. As they  
gazed,  
Sudden, as with a last despairing  
strength  
And a hoarse shout, again, a torrent of  
steel,  
The men of Arvon, by their own weight  
pressed,  
Burst on the scant defenders of the  
pass;  
Like some fierce surge which from the  
storm-vest sea,  
Through narrow inlets fenced by rocky  
walls,  
Lifts high its furious crest, and sweeps  
in ruin  
Within the rayless, haunted ocean caves,  
Rocks, wreckage, and the corpses of  
the dead.

And as the women, impotent to save,  
With agonizing hands and streaming  
eyes  
Looked down upon the pass, they saw  
their loves  
Driven back, o'erwhelmed, surrounded,  
flashing swords  
And thrusting spears and broken shields,  
and heard  
The noise of desperate battle, then a  
pause  
And silence, as the last of Meirion's sons  
Sank in his blood and the long fight  
was done.

Then suddenly, ere yet the conquer-  
ing host  
Might climb to them, Blodeuwedd,  
standing clothed  
In her unearthly beauty, faced the  
throng

Of shrinking women. Not a word she  
 spake.  
 The sinking sun upon her snowy  
 robe  
 Shone with unearthly gold ; like some  
 fair bird  
 Leading the flock she showed. With  
 one white arm  
 She pointed to the dreadful pass where  
 lay  
 The thick-piled corpses, with the other  
 signed  
 Toward the sheer cliff, and to the lake  
 beneath  
 Motioned. One word she uttered -  
 " Follow me,"  
 And all who heard it knew and shared  
 her mind.

Then looking to the heavens, she  
 hurried down  
 Through thyme and heather, chanting  
 some wild hymn  
 To the Immortal Gods ; and with her  
 went  
 The white-robed throng, and when they  
 gained the verge,  
 Without a pause, plunged through the  
 empty air

Into the unfathomed depths, like some  
 great flight  
 Of white birds swooping from a sea-  
 cliff down  
 To ocean. The still waters leapt in  
 foam ;  
 One loud shriek only woke the air, and  
 then  
 Silence was over all, and night and  
 death.

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Still sometimes, when the dreaming  
 peasants go  
 By the lone mountain tarn at shut of  
 day,  
 The white clouds with the eve descend-  
 ing swift  
 Down the steep hillside to the lake may  
 seem  
 The white-robed maidens falling, and  
 the shriek  
 Of night birds, fair Blodeuwedd and  
 her train ;  
 And fancy, by the ancient fable fed,  
 Turns from the duller Present's dust  
 and glare  
 To the enchanted twilights of the Past

## II.

## THE PHYSICIANS OF MYDDFAL.

FAR, far away in wikt Wales, by the shore of the boundless Atlantic,  
 Where the cloud-capt peaks of the North are dwarfed to the hills of the South,  
 And through the long vale to the sea, the full-fed, devious Towy  
 Turns and returns on itself, like the coils of a silvery snake,  
 A grey town sits up aloft on the bank of the clear, flowing river,  
 As it has sat since the days when the Roman was first in the land.  
 A town, with a high ruined castle and walls mantled over with ivy,  
 With church towers square and strong and narrow irregular streets,  
 And, frequent in street and lane, many-windowed high-shouldered chapels,

Whence all the still Sabbath ascend loud preaching and passionate prayer,  
Such violent wrestling with sin, that the dogs on the pavement deserted  
Wake with a growl from their dreans at the sound of the querulous voice,  
And the gay youths, released from the counter and bound for the seaside or  
hillside,

Start as they wake on their way echoes of undevout feet,  
And here and there a rude square, with statues of popular heroes,  
A long quay with scarcely a ship, and a hoary bridge spanning the stream,  
The stream which struggles in June by the shallows where children are swimming,  
The furious flood which at Yule roars seaward, resistless along,  
Though the white steam ribbons float by it, forlorn it seems, almost forsaken.  
All the day long in the week the dumb streets are hushed in repose,  
But on market or fair days there comes a throng of Welsh-speaking peasants  
From many a lonely farm in the folds of the rain-beaten hills,  
And the long streets are filled with the high-pitched speech of the chaffering  
Cymry,

With a steeple-crowned hat, here and there, and the red cloaks which daunted  
the French.

Scarce in Keltic Brittany's self, or in homely Teutonic Silesia,  
So foreign a crowd may you see as in this far corner of Wales.

Above the grey old town, at the mouth of the exquisite valley,  
Rises a quaint village church deep in o'ershadowing yews ;  
On a round-topped hill it stands, looking down on the silvery river  
And the smooth meadows enced by tall elms, and the black kine, like flies on  
the green.

Below, 'midst its smooth-pleached lawns, stands the many-roofed Anglican  
palace,

And aloft from its straight-ridged pines, the enchanter's summit ascends.  
Thence along the upward vale, by fold upon fold of the river,  
By park and by tower, at last the far-off mountain chains soar,  
Flecked with shadow and sunshine which float on the side of the desolate  
moorland,

And the whole still landscape lies bathed in a haze of ineffable peace.

There, where the mountains ascend by the white little town of Llandovery,  
Steeply the circular side of the crater-like summit dips down.  
A blue lake lies bentath, deep set in the desolate hollow,  
Where scarcely a breath of air ruffles in summer its face.  
The Van Lake 'tis called of old time, like the Van Lake of distant Armenia.  
Hardly a wayfarer's foot comes near, or a wayfarer's eye.  
But far, far below are seen the white homesteads, dotting the valley,  
And to-day, as of old, still silence and solitude everywhere reign.



There, as in crowded towns, life is real and full of striving ;  
There, too, is life fulfilled of small hopes and of trivial fears.  
There, too, the finger of fate, unavoidable, pitiless, awful,  
Points with unfaltering aim, to the road which our footsteps shall tread.  
Love is among them, and hate, low desires and high aspirations,  
Fortune is blind there as here, the good mourn, and the wicked rejoice.  
Only there the sense of the Past, the romantic, the mystical lingers,  
Touched with a glamour and charm, denied to the turmoil of towns.  
The light which never has been, still shines on those hillsides secluded,  
Illuming with rays, not of earth, those homely and labouring lives.  
Here is a tale which is cherished to-day through that far-withdrawn valley,  
Half believed by the aged folk still, but year by year fading away.

Long, long ago, when our Princes were falling in fight with the Norman,  
And all our wild Wales lay o'erwhelmed by a torrent of rapine and blood,  
A brave peasant woman strove here with hard fate, though her husband had  
fallen,  
Strove for her only boy, who was rising to manhood apace.  
So close was the bond which bound widowed mother and dutiful stripling,  
None of Myddfai's daughters touched the young man's self-contained heart.  
A kindly fortune smiled on the toil of the desolate woman,  
Their flocks and their herds increased on the meads of the bountiful vale,  
So quickly their numbers grew, that from the shorn valley he drove them  
To fresh fields and pastures new on the side of the mystical hills.

Morning and evening he watched on the lonely side of the hollow,  
While the grey kine wandered at will on the hill's half-precipitous steep.  
Oft on the lake's still surface, no breath came to ruffle the mirror,  
Nor sound, save the boulders rolled downward, that stirred for a moment its  
calm.  
All the day long he mused, wrapt in thought on the desolate hillside,  
All day the sure-footed kine cropt the sweet grass of the hills.  
Thoughts came to him, innocent thoughts of a chaste youth guileless of error,  
Thoughts of a maiden as fair as a young man's passionate dream.

Fair were the maidens of Myddfai, but fairer his far-off ideal,  
Which touched with a glamour of gold the day-dreams of innocent youth.  
All the day long he dreamt on, gazing down on the blue of the waters,  
Till the plash of the trout, as they rose, seemed the oar of some mystical bark ;  
All the day long he mused, and with evening, by moonlight or starlight,  
Dreaming he wound his slow way with his kine to the valley below,  
Dreaming through fair summer days and the long dark evenings of winter  
The sweet shy dreams of a youth fulfilled of a virginal shame.

In secret his mother noted the dreams which her son was dreaming,  
Marking the far-off look in the absent eyes of the boy.  
Fain would she rouse him with jests and bantering words, but the stripling  
Smiled a soft smile in reply, then turned to his musings again.

When he had spent many days in happy and undisturbed dreaming,  
One day, as the setting sun threw beams of bright gold on the lake,  
Lo ! a great marvel and wonder, a herd of phantom-like oxen  
Seemed to his dazzled eyes to emerge from the mystical depths.  
White they were, brindled and white, heavy dewlapped, lords of the meadows,  
Driven as it seemed by a swan from the lake's far centre along.  
Nearer and nearer they drew, till the swan to his yearning vision  
Grew to a maiden as fair as the fanciful Fair of his dreams.  
Gold were her locks and blue her eyes as the clear sky of autumn,  
White was her bosom and red the half-opened rose of her mouth.  
Nearer and nearer she came, till the youth, with ineffable longing,  
Stretched forth his passionate arms to fold to his bosom the Fair,  
Stretched forth, and offered her bread in humble token of friendship ;  
But the Fair smiled a sweet smile, smiled and eluded his grasp.  
Then, as he stood on the brink, in mute and motionless yearning,  
Lo ! with a silvery laugh, the fair vision faded away.

Oftentimes thus on the brink he stood afterwards waiting the maiden,  
Often she came not at all, or a strong wind ruffled the deep.  
Twice again did she come, and he held forth bread for her taking.  
Still, with a silvery laugh, refusing, she faded away.

Careworn the young man grew, and spent with unsatisfied yearnings,  
Nor recked though the kine unheeded strayed on the perilous steep.  
Never again the lake maiden came by sunlight or moonlight,  
Till his fond hope too long deferred, wasted him body and soul.  
All his sleepless nights were filled with the pitiless vision ;  
All the musing days, a slow fire burned in his breast ;  
Half ashamed, he told his mother his pain, and the pitying woman  
Sighed that her son should thus pine, but knew not to succour his grief.  
Marking his cheeks' red flush, she feared lest her son might be taken,  
Till she found no heart for her toil, and her substance wasted away.

There, when Midsummer Eve was come, the magical season,  
The young man wandered in vain on the brink of the mystical lake ;  
There, when All-Hallow-tide came, he wandered, if only the maiden  
Might rise on his longing eyes ; but never at all did she come.  
At last, on the year's last night, he, stealthily rising at midnight,

To the cold lake side went, hopeless, with faltering feet.  
 The full moon bathed in silver steep hillside and slumbering waters.  
 By the cold lake side he paused, with something of half-renewed hope,  
 When, borne on the face of the waters, behold by the reeds of the lake side  
 Floating a magical disc of milk-white mystical bread.  
 Swift, yet with reverence too, as one taking the Host at the altar,  
 Kneeling, the youth partook of the strange ineffable food,  
 Till ere the weird rite was ended, again a marvellous portent  
 Directed his longing eyes, and stayed the quick throb of his heart,  
 For lo ! on the silvery path of the moon on the undisturbed waters,  
 The herd that he saw once before came slowly gliding to land,  
 And beyond them—oh, vision of bliss !—the maid of his dreams, approaching,  
 Plying a light golden oar, in a swift-moving shallop of gold.  
 Nearer she came and more near, while his heart stood still with emotion,  
 Fearing the glorious dream should once again vanish away ;  
 Nearer and nearer she came, and leaped from the skiff to the lake side,  
 And lay, in unearthly beauty, willingly clasped in his arms.

When he found tongue to speak, " Oh, my love, at last have I found thee !  
 Though not of earth is thy race, oh, stoop to my virginal love.  
 Oh, it is long I have loved thee, and though I know thee immortal,  
 Tarry awhile, fair vision, leave me not loveless again !  
 Come from thy mountain heights, come from thy dwelling deep down in the waters.  
 Pity me ere I die who can only live in thy love."  
 Then the maid, " Rhiwallon, I love thee ; long time have I tried thy devotion,  
 Long have I pitied thy vigils spent in these desolate hills ;  
 Always have I been near thee, unseen have I witnessed thy yearnings,  
 Only the mystical bread was wanting to join us in one.  
 Now we are one heart and soul, I will live with thee always, and love thee."  
 And together the mystical bread they ate, and their lives were made one.

Then said the maiden, " Oh, mortal ! this warning I needs must give thee.  
 Thy wife will I be all thy days—thy dear wife, faithful and true,  
 Nourish thy children, obey thee in all things, be dutiful always,  
 Fill all thy fields with the dowry thou seest of full-uddered kine,  
 Love thee and cherish thee always, and plenish thy barn with good harvests,  
 Long as the will of high Heaven gives thee to live upon earth.  
 Only, this ordinance holds if a maid of the race of immortals  
 Wed with a mortal on earth, leaving her higher estate,  
 If he should strike her three times, she and hers, her bonds being loosened,  
 Whether she will it or not, return to her kindred again."  
 Careless the fond youth heard, and smothered her warning with kisses,  
 And down through the joyous New Year he went with his bride to their home.

Long in great welfare they lived, knit together in happy wedlock ;  
Never a cloud arose on the tranquil sky of their home,  
The great herds throve and increased more than all the herds of the valley,  
The robbers who harried the vale left them untouched and in peace.  
Never was husband more fond of the wife of his boyish affection,  
Never was wife more sweet, or fuller of dutiful love.  
The good mother died full of years, and calling her daughter blessed.  
Children were born of their love, more than others prudent and fair.  
Their strong sons were good and discreet, laborious, eager for knowledge,  
Scarcely the Abbot himself equalled their learning, 'twas said ;  
Fair were the daughters and good, sweet, dutiful maidens, and prudent ;  
Nowhere in all our wild Wales was a race so gracious and fair.

And yet, when their wedlock was new, that had happened which now was  
forgotten.

The youth and his bride were bidden one day to a christening feast.  
The young husband hastened to go ; but the wife, with half-hid reluctance,  
Loitered till almost too late to traverse the difficult hills.  
Many a pretext she urged, not loving the rites of religion,  
Holding some primitive faith, old as the hills and the seas,  
Till, when the hour was grown late, Rhiwallon in playful impatience,  
Seeking his wife up and down, found her reluctant at last.  
" Come," said he, " wife, it is time," and smilingly on her fair shoulder  
Tapped with his empty glove, and she rose and obeyed with a sigh.  
" Dearest, remember," she said, " my warning when first we were wedded ;  
Once that has been which should not. Remember, be careful, my heart !"  
Then to the christening she went, nor shrank from the priest nor the water,  
Only a vague disquietude long time troubled their souls.

Also long years after this, when the past was wellnigh forgotten,  
They were bidden together again to a gay marriage feast in the vale ;  
Not now was the wife unwilling, but ready to go and eager.  
In deep contentment the pair went forth to the innocent feast.  
Duly the marriage sped, the priest said his mystical office,  
No word the goodwife spake, as she knelt in her place by her lord ;  
But when the marriage was done, and they sate at the jovial bride-feast,  
Sudden the goodman perceived his wife in a passion of tears ;  
Sobbing, she sate by his side inconsolable loudly lamenting,  
Till all the gay company rose with dismay from the midst of their mirth.  
Always her prescient soul saw the future hidden from mortals,  
The grief that should come of that day, the dreadful problems of life,  
The lives that from that day's mirth should arise—to what fate predestined ?  
The long generations of men foredoomed to sorrow alone.

Knowing the fever of life and its ending, the mystical woman  
 Held not her peace, but burst forth in a passion of weeping and pain ;  
 But Rhiwallon, knowing not all, but filled with distress for the bridefolk,  
 Turned to her, and bidding her cease, touched lightly her arm in reproof.  
 In one moment she ceased from her wailing, and scarcely regarding her goodman,  
 "Love," she said, "that was the second time ; only one other remains."

All these things had they almost forgot, living happy in wedlock,  
 Watching their children grow to strong manhood and womanhood fair ;  
 Smoothly their lives flowed along in unbroken weal and affection,  
 As their devious Towy, which wound through cornland and mead to the sea.  
 Not a thought had the goodman of death, or of parting, than death more bitter ;  
 But the goodwife, loving her lord, watched with solicitous thought.  
 Scarce from her prescient mind had faded the danger which pressed them,  
 The bliss which a careless touch might turn in a moment to pain ;  
 Here on the kindly earth she had made her choice and her dwelling,  
 Here she would willingly live with her husband, and with him would die.  
 Far off her birthland appeared, cold and lifeless the mystical waters ;  
 Better to sleep in the meads than to pass that cold portal again.  
 Love's light beaming warm on her life, in her veins the warm human life-blood  
 Filled with new longings a heart which was only half human before.  
 "What would life profit her now to those ice-cold abysses returning ?  
 Better to die upon earth by the fate which awaiteth us all."  
 Thus the goodwife, half human in heart, mused in silence, her children around  
 her,  
 Filled with a deep hoding sense of the terrible nearness of fate.

Last it befell once again that the pair were bidden together  
 (Christening for youth, for full age bride-feasts, for old age the grave),  
 To a solemn burial they went ; 'twas a friend of their youth who was taken.  
 All the desolate house was hushed in mourning and tears,  
 But before the dead was borne forth, the strange heart of the mystical woman,  
 Long keeping silence with pain, broke out at last into mirth.  
 Was it because she knew that the burden of living is heavy,  
 From what load of misery here the dead are delivered by death ?  
 Or was it because she knew of her old primæval religion  
 How much higher than human life is the lot of the just who are dead ?  
 Or was it her soul had beheld the restitution of all things,  
 And felt a great hope and joy which lightened the shadow of death ?  
 Who shall tell ? but her elfin nature broke forth in immoderate laughter,  
 Piercing the mourners' hearts, as they stood round the bier of the dead.  
 Long time the goodman was mute, till at last keen shame overcame him,  
 No more could he suffer unmoved that meaningless laughter and joy.

"Hush, hush! wife," he said, "you forget," and touched her again on the shoulder.  
 "For the ending of troubles I laughed," she replied, and grew grave and was still.

Then with a sob and a sigh the goodwife, looking behind her,  
 Rose from her place by her lord and swiftly passed forth by the door.  
 "Farewell," she said, "oh my love; thou hast struck me the third and the last  
 time.

Fate 'tis that parteth us—Fate! Farewell! I shall see thee no more."  
 So strange she showed and so weird that the goodman dared not detain her.  
 Seeing his goodwife no more, and knowing the finger of Fate;  
 Seeing his goodwife no more, no longer the well-beloved features,  
 The hair that was silvered by time, the dim eyes with their motherly care;  
 But the radiant figure once more, golden-haired, azure-eyed, and immortal,  
 That at midnight arose, long ago, from the depths of the mystical lake.  
 None offered to stay her course, but she glided alone, unattended,  
 Splendid in radiant youth, up the lonely, precipitous hills.  
 Not to her home or her children returned, nor tarried a moment;  
 Straight to the hillside she went, weeping and blinded with tears,  
 And as she passed by the fields where her magical cattle were grazing,  
 Always she carolled aloud a strange and mystical song.  
 "Come hither, Brindle!" she sang; "come, White Spot! bring your calves  
 with you!  
 Come thou, White Lord of the Herd, who wert born in the House of the King!  
 Come, we must go to our home! and ye, yoked patient-eyed oxen,  
 Come with me, come with the rest; it is time, come all of ye home!"

The great herds heard the call, and streamed in an endless procession;  
 The gray oxen burst from the furrow, leaving the ploughshare behind.  
 Up the rough hillside they climbed behind her, obeying her mandate,  
 Till they showed to the gazers below like a white cloud mounting the steep.  
 Up the steep hillside they sped to the lake, and the wondering peasants  
 Heard a clear voice from the hill, "Deuwch adre! Deuwch adre! Come home!"

Never again upon earth had Rhiwallon sight of his helpmeet,  
 Never again did he seek his love on the lake and the hills;  
 Wayworn and weary he grew, nor might dreams of beauty allure him.  
 The face that he loved and lost was aged, with silvery hair;  
 But the beautiful being who went from her seat at the fateful banquet—  
 What was her youth to his age, or his age to her radiant youth?  
 What if his eyes once again should perceive the bright vision of old time,  
 Old as he was, and changed from the hopeful dreams of the boy?  
 Nay, it would kill him to see the black deep which had taken his life's love.  
 Never again did he gaze on its hateful magical face.

But the strong sons, when they knew their mother was gone from among them—  
Gone without even a word, to strange death or to mystical life—  
Evening by evening would climb the lonely, precipitous hillside,  
Yearning if haply their eyes might see the loved features again.  
Long, long vigils they spent in vain, nor ever the vision  
Came, any more than it comes to all children orphaned on earth,  
Till one night, when all hope was dead, they burst into passionate weeping.  
"Mother, thy children," they said, "call thee, and call thee in vain.  
Break through the fetters of Fate, take again thy womanly nature ;  
Come to us, mother, once more, let us see thee and hear thee again."  
And lo ! as they looked, in the moonlight a shining, beautiful figure  
Came in a shallop of gold, on the silvery path of the moon.  
Nearer and nearer it came ; but lo ! as they gazed in fond yearning,  
Not as their mother it seemed, but a youthful, fairy-like form.  
Gold were her locks and blue her eyes, as the clear sky of autumn.  
Bitterly weeping, they turned from the lake side with sinking young hearts—  
Turned from the lake side, and went, side by side, down the hill paths in silence,  
Silent, with never a word, till they came within sight of their home.  
Then close behind them they heard a sweet voice, which called to them softly,  
And, turning round quickly, they saw the mother they loved and had lost.

"Listen, dear sons," she said. "With what spells you have drawn me ye  
know not.

No power but motherly love can bring an immortal to earth,  
No other love can avail to reknit the bonds that are broken ;  
Only her child's strong cry calls back a mother again.  
Give me your hands and kiss me ; for see, I am old as you knew me,  
The youth of those cold depths changed for the kindlier ripeness of earth.  
Lo, I am now as I was, when an earthly love kept me among you,  
Only I view all things with a clearer and perfecter sight.  
Yours, dear sons, it must be to succour your suffering brothers.  
Bound to a body which age and disease waste quickly away,  
Healers your race shall be, knowing many a secret of Nature,  
And all the virtues of herbs, which are sent for the comfort of man.  
When ye come to these lonely heights, I will meet you and speak with you always,  
Teaching the secrets of life, which are hid from the great ones of earth.  
Come to me often, dear sons ; I shall see you afar, and will meet you,  
Walk with you always, discourse with you, teach you to live and be wise.  
Say to my girls that they cherish their father and comfort him always ;  
Bid them remember their mother, who loves as she loved them on earth.  
And now, farewell, dear hearts, since to earth your yearnings have brought me.  
While you live I will always be with you. Be wise, then, my children, and  
good."

Often at evening, the youths would climb to the mystical lake side,  
 Culling the simples that grew on the slopes of the desolate hills—  
 "Pant y Meddygon," men called it, "The dingle of the Physicians"—  
 And with them, wherever they went, their mother invisible came,  
 Teaching them all that 'tis lawful to know of the secrets of Nature  
 And the powers of healing that seem to be God's own prerogative gift.  
 Such was the knowledge they took from their loving, mystical mother,  
 In all our wide Britain was found no leech so skilful as they.  
 All the sick of the country around flocked to them to be healed by their cunning ;  
 Broad lands in Myddfai and rank the Lord Rhys gave for their skill.  
 Often, for years and for years, men might see the gentle Physicians  
 Culling the herbs on the hills, to battle with death and with pain.  
 From manhood to age they passed, still learning and perfecting knowledge,  
 Mounting the hillside at last with slower and tottering steps ;  
 And often a shepherd would tell of a clear voice which spoke with them always,  
 And oft of a shadowy form, guiding their faltering feet.

So they passed, and were laid in the grave, obeying the mandate of Nature,  
 Wrapt round in the sweet, cold earth by the kindly general law.  
 Their sons and their sons' sons came, increasing the lore of their fathers ;  
 But no kindly Presence came to walk with them over the hills.  
 Slowly, through ages of Time, as the fierce glare of knowledge assails it,  
 Hardly the fair tale can live in the light of our commoner day ;  
 But still through the country side runs the fame of the gentle Physicians.  
 The grove of Physician Evan is known in Myddfai to-day.  
 "Llwyn Ifan Feddyg," it runs, and another—"Llwyn Meredydd Feddyg."  
 Thus, in the old, old tongue, the old, old legend survives.  
 The skill, which through centuries lightened the burden of suffering mortals,  
 Lacked not memorials still in the hearts of the aged and sick ;  
 Nay, in fair Brecknock itself, in the church of far-off Llandefallte,  
 Only a century since, were their praises engraved on their tombs.  
 Where is the sceptic would doubt the tale of the mystical mother,  
 If, five centuries after she went, the Meddygon of Myddfai could heal ?  
 Or if living men in their youth, on the first fair Sabbath of August,  
 Have thronged from the fair town below to the banks of the mystical lake,  
 Hoping to see its still surface boil sudden, the white herds emerging,  
 And the golden shallop and oar, and the beautiful Presence of old—  
 Hoping, but hoping in vain, yet in simple belief unshaken,  
 For had they not witnessed her cures of the weak, and the halt, and the blind ?

But to-day, with its broader light, flouts these beautiful stories romantic.  
 No more these fair visions unearthly are seen on the lakes and the hills,  
 From knowledge alone is strength ; but 'tis oh for the fair dreams of old time,



The genius which clothed deep truths in fanciful vestures and fair !  
 Not more in the legends of Hellas, than these fair myths of the Cymry,  
 Are grave truths and precious set in a beautiful framework of song.  
 Let them be ; they are fair, they are fine, though they wear not their pearl on  
 their foreheads.

Let them be ; they are flowers of our Race, and as is the flower is the fruit.  
 Not in the savage tales of the Norseman the Cymry delighted—  
 Tales of blood-stained feasts and rude gods, consumed in a furnace of fire—  
 But this gentle Physician's story of ruth for suffering mortals,  
 Mild wisdom, o'ermastering Fate, young passion, and motherly love.  
 Not wholly your tale shall perish, oh kindly Physicians of Myddfai,  
 Nor the charm of that mystical soul which was born of and lost in the deep ;  
 Not wholly, while speech is mine, though the low rays of knowledge shall flout you,  
 And in its broad, pitiless glare you dwindle and vanish away.

But still, as I linger and gaze, perusing the exquisite valley,  
 Upward by castle and peak, downward by river and town,  
 Whether from wooded Cystanog, or yew-shaded graves of Llangunnor,  
 Closing the upward gaze, far off lies the mystical steep.  
 Many fair scenes lie between us—gray Drysllwyn's verdant hillock,  
 Grongar long precious to verse, Dynevor's castle and wood,  
 High perched on its precipice-crag the ruins of grim Cerrigcennen,  
 Or the green vale higher than these, where the fair Towy winds and unwinds.  
 However the gaze ascends, the dark precipice closes the landscape,  
 Beneath whose difficult steep lies the haunted abyss of the lake.  
 Always the story comes back as I gaze, the beautiful legend  
 Which here for long ages of time the wondering peasants believed.  
 In yonder churchyard lie those, who ere they were freed from the body,  
 Grew strong through their poor brief lives by the gift of the Fair of the lake ;  
 And, as the sun moves to the West and defines the deep shades of the hollow,  
 I am fired by the fair old tale, till almost I take it for true.

## III.

## THE CURSE OF PANTANNAS.

'MID fair Glamorgan's hills the close-  
 set vales  
 Teem with men's works and toil. The  
 great shafts rise,  
 Belching forth smoke and fire ; the  
 labouring beams

Of the great engines slowly lift and  
 pause

And fall with rhythmic beat. The  
 labouring town

Creeps down the winding valley ; the  
 poor streets

Are deep in inky dust. There comes  
 no sound

But children's clamour or the sob or  
 shriek

Of the quick-throbbing steam. The  
 men are sunk  
 Beneath the earth, or sleeping weary  
 sleep.  
 Toil, toil, or rest from toil, that is the  
 sum  
 Of those unnumbered lives. Yet are  
 they filled  
 With joys and griefs as are the great  
 on earth,  
 And through the teeming village love  
 and toil  
 Are everywhere ; the poor lives come  
 to birth,  
 Grow ripe and are deceased, but never  
 more  
 The face of nature is as 'twas at first.

But on the unfenced hillsides, far  
 above,  
 The sounds, the dust, the smoke, come  
 not at all.  
 Still solitude is there, where seldom  
 foot  
 Of weary toil intrudes ; the keen cool  
 air  
 Blows fresh and still untainted on the  
 hills ;  
 Awhile the dark pines climb aloft, then  
 stay,  
 Like a tired traveller, and naught  
 remains  
 But short sweet grass and thyme and  
 nibbling sheep,  
 And mountain torrents hid in deep  
 ravines,  
 While the swift gaze ranges from vale  
 to vale  
 Masked by its veil of smoke. And,  
 when 'tis night,  
 Immense Auroras, glaring o'er the sky,  
 Mark where amid the folded hillsides  
 lies

The City of the Martyr. Here, where  
 still  
 The Cymric lore, the Cymric speech  
 survive,  
 The half-forgotten fables of old time,  
 Of gnome and fairy, flourish undis-  
 turbed  
 Amid the noontide glare of common  
 day,  
 And one there is reaped from this very  
 spot  
 And breathing of the race, and it is  
 this :—

Long, long ago, the fair-folk on the  
 earth  
 Were frequent, and their rings upon the  
 meads  
 Showed green wherever virgin pastures  
 were,  
 And o'er the leas their elfin music  
 thrilled  
 Whether of oaten pipe or silvery flute,  
 While the young moon was rising on  
 the hills,  
 And the gay elves footed it merrily  
 Upon the dry smooth turf. So oft they  
 came,  
 Summer and winter, on his sweet short  
 grass,  
 That one grave churl who at Pantannas  
 dwelt,  
 Hating the senseless revel and the race,  
 In anger to the witch who dwelt hard  
 by  
 Revealed his case, demanding if she  
 knew  
 Some potent charm wherewith to free  
 his life  
 From this insensate mirth of godless  
 souls.

Then she, knowing his wish and all  
the lore  
Of the forbidden books, counselled him  
thus :—

“ Wherever on thy pastures shows a  
ring  
Which tells of elfin revelry by night,  
Yoke thy strong oxen, driving straight  
through them  
Thy ploughs, till all lie fallow. Sow  
them thick  
With kindly corn fit for the use of  
man,  
So, when the harvest comes, this tricky  
folk,  
That hates the newer race of mortal  
men  
And that which gives them food, will  
come no more,  
For chiefly the unsullied meads they  
love  
Where never ploughshare came since  
the old time  
Ere men were first on earth. So shalt  
thou gain  
Great harvests for thy wealth, and shalt  
disperse  
This cursed people, and shalt reap white  
wheat  
Till all thy barns o’erflow, and thou  
indeed  
Art lord of thy own lands far more than  
now,  
Do thou this thing, and Fortune shall  
be thine,  
And peace and the full mastery of thy  
own.”

So did the churl. He drove his iron  
ploughs  
Through the inviolate meads, and  
straight the sounds

Of dance and song grew silent. Never  
more  
Came those strange elfin rings upon  
his fields,  
Nor any traveller passing saw a glimpse  
Of those quick-tripping feet ; but far  
away  
The fair-folk turned, where yet no cruel  
share  
Was sent to kill the greensward. Spring-  
tide came :  
The fields grew splendid with the  
wheat’s bright green,  
When, one day as the sun had kissed  
the hills,  
The grave churl, turning homeward,  
saw a form  
Upon his path which threatened him,  
and said,  
“ Daw dial ! ” “ Vengeance comes ! ”  
And in the night,  
When all was still, there came a noise  
which shook  
The house as though ’twould fall, and  
the same voice,  
“ Daw dial ! ” And when now ’twas  
harvest-tide  
And the great barns stood open for the  
grain,  
One night, no ear nor straw was in the  
fields,  
Only black ashes, and the same strange  
form  
Met him again, pointing a sword at  
him,  
And in the same weird accents, “ It  
begins,”  
“ Nid yw ond dechreu.”

Then the churl, afraid,  
Begged for forgiveness, willing that the  
fields  
Should turn to meads again, wherupon  
the sprite

Promised at last that he would pray  
his king  
Forgiveness of the fault, and come  
again  
On the third day, bringing his lord's  
behest.

Now, when the third day came, the  
churl went forth  
Through his burnt fields, and there  
again the elf  
Waited, and to the other made report,  
"The king's word is for aye unchange-  
able,  
And vengeance must be done. Still,  
- since thy fault  
Thou dost repent, and hast atoned in  
part,  
Therefore, not in thy time, nor of thy  
sons,  
Shall the curse fall, but, poised on  
high, await  
Thy distant seed." Then he, as one  
who hears  
Reprieve from death, o'erjoyed sent forth  
his hinds  
To turn the corn to pasture. Once  
again  
The dark green rings grew frequent on  
the grass,  
The gay elves danced, the old melodious  
sounds  
Of song and music gladdened all the  
fields,  
And he grew rich and passed in peace-  
ful age,  
And his sons followed him, and slept in  
peace.

But still, when fourscore years or  
more had fled,  
The dread voice came at times, repeat-  
ing still

The self-same threat, "Daw dial!"  
"Vengeance comes!"  
Of heard across the years; but since  
long use  
Obscures the sense, so, when this  
warning came  
And no harm followed it, the wealthy  
squire  
Who held Pantannas then, took little  
heed  
Of half-forgotten memories. His young  
son  
Rhydderch was come to manhood, and  
would wed  
Gwen, daughter of Pencraig, and both  
their houses  
Were fain of it. A noble pair were  
they,  
In fitted years, and rank, and mutual  
troth.  
No cloud came on the sky of their  
young love,  
But all men praised the bridegroom's  
gallant port  
And the bride's sweetness, and they  
made a feast  
At gray Pantannas ere the marriage day,  
Whereto the fair girl Gwen and all her  
kin  
Were bidden. It was the wintry  
joyous time  
Of Yule-tide and the birth-time of the  
Lord,  
When all hearts, for the sacred season  
glad,  
Make merry in the fading of the year.

With mirth had sped the feast; all,  
round the hearth  
Were seated, Gwen and Rhydderch  
side by side.  
Careless they winged the hours with  
tale and song.

The night was still, there came no  
breath of sound,  
Only without the loud unceasing fall  
Of the full river plunging down the  
rocks,  
Only within the noise of mirth and  
song.

Then suddenly they seemed to hear  
a voice  
Above the roaring stream. A silence  
fell  
On all the joyous group. Not as the  
voice  
So often heard it came, but seemed to  
wail  
Some unremembered word. The  
maiden clung  
Close to her lover for a while, and  
then  
The jovial hearth, the jest, the tale,  
the song,  
Chased all their fears, and all was as  
before.  
No sound without but the unceasing  
noise  
Of the full river plunging down the  
rocks.

Then, swift again, above the sounds  
of mirth,  
Above the river roaring through the  
rocks,  
A clear voice, dreadful, pealed, "The  
Time is come!"  
"Dach Amser!" thus it wailed. And  
all the guests  
Rose to the door, seeking whence came  
the voice,  
And first the goodman went, his worn  
cheek pale  
With fear, remembering the tales he  
heard

In boyhood of the voice. Long time  
they stood  
Expecting, but no voice they heard,  
nor sound,  
But the loud river plunging down the  
rocks. \*

Till, as they turned them houseward  
once again,  
Above the roaring waters, three times  
heard,  
The same voice pealed, "The Time is  
come! the Time!"  
Then they affrighted and in silence  
went  
Within the house, and then a mighty  
noise  
Crashed round them, and it seemed a  
mighty hand  
Shook all to the foundations. As they  
sate  
In fear, without a word, a shapeless hag  
Stood at the casement. Then one,  
bolder, said,  
"Why comest thou, thou loathely  
thing?" And she,  
"Peace, chatterer, I have naught with  
thee. I come  
To tell the doom which waits this  
curied house  
And that which weds with it. But  
since thy tongue  
Is thus injurious, never will I lift  
The veil that doth conceal it." With  
the word  
She vanished, none knew whither.  
When she had gone,  
And all was still again, the cry, the  
cry,  
Rose loud and ceased not. Then a  
deep affright  
Fell upon all, and gloom. The hour  
grew late,

And from the hapless house the trem-  
bling guests  
Went on their lonely ways. Rhydderch  
alone,  
Grown careless in the flush of innocent  
love,  
Delayed his love's departure, till they  
went  
Alone at midnight down the haunted  
vale,  
Across the roaring waters. Unafraid  
The lovers fared, nor voice nor shape  
of ill  
Assailed them, undismayed, defying all  
The unseen powers of Death and Doom  
and Ill,  
Strong in the virgin mail of mutual  
love.

But when the maid was safe within  
her home,  
And it was time to part, some livelier  
sense  
Of peril took her, and her boding fear  
Burst forth in tender words. "Dearest,"  
she said,  
"Good-night! Farewell! Some sense  
of coming ill  
Weighs down my heart. If we should  
meet no more,  
Or if some long delay should cheat our  
love,  
I will be faithful always, and will wed  
With thee, and none beside. Ay,  
though the powers  
Of ill should part us all our lives and  
leave me  
Widowed of thee!" And he, "Fear  
not, my life,  
The Power of Love protects us. If I  
come not  
At once to claim thee, as indeed I  
hope,

And if the powers of ill have might to  
part  
Our lives awhile, yet am I true to thee.  
It! may be some dark ruin waits our  
house  
For some forgotten wrong; yet, what  
care I?  
They cannot touch our lives, these  
envious powers,  
Nor blight our love. What care I for  
the rest,  
My treasure, having thee?"

Then, with a kiss,  
They parted unafraid, and the youth  
passed  
The ceaseless voices and the roaring  
stream  
Undaunted, clothed with love, and  
caring naught  
For things of earth or air.

But as he sped  
Across the self-same fields, which long  
years past  
The ploughshare broke, hard by some  
haunted cave  
Beneath the hill, a ring of fairy green  
Before him showed, around him bursts  
of mirth  
Came of invisible throats, and silvery  
sounds  
Of elfin music sweet; and, rapt in love,  
And thinking careless of his dear alone,  
He stepped within the circle, and was  
lost,  
While Time should last, to home, and  
kin, and love.

For nowhere might his sorrowing  
parents find  
Trace of their son. They searched the  
country round,  
Through every grove and brake; they  
searched the depths

Of the loud plunging stream ; but never  
 at all  
 They found him. Then, when many  
 weeks had gone,  
 They sought a hermit in his holy cell,  
 And told him all, the wailing cry which  
 rang  
 Through the sad night, the loathely  
 form which came.  
 They told him all, and he, with grief  
 and tears,  
 Knowing what judgment must o'ertake  
 the youth,  
 Though guiltless, bade the mourners  
 hope no more  
 To see him, whether in life he was or  
 death ;  
 And they, lamenting him as lost, at  
 last  
 Lived their old life, and all was as  
 before,  
 Till, losing not their sorrow, but bent  
 down  
 By weight of time, they passed, and in  
 the ground  
 Were laid, but never again beheld their  
 son.

But Gwen, the gentle maiden, when  
 she knew  
 That which had been, and how her  
 love was gone,  
 Mourned for him long, and long time  
 would lament  
 The cruelty of fate, but never at all  
 Believed that he was dead, for still she  
 held  
 That he would come again—it might  
 be soon,  
 It might be after years, but still would  
 come,  
 As his word promised. So she dried  
 her tears,

Feeding a deathless hope, and every  
 day,  
 Morning and evening, when the circling  
 sun  
 Burst from the gates of dawn, or sank  
 in night,  
 Upon the summit of the scarpèd rock  
 Would stand, and scan the landscape  
 far and near,  
 Seeking her love's return, and, when  
 he came not,  
 Descend in grief. Year after year she  
 came,  
 Till from love's casements her unfalter-  
 ing soul  
 Looked dimly, and the gathering snows  
 of time  
 Whitened her chestnut locks, yet still  
 she came,  
 Steadfast, nor failed of hope, while yet  
 she could,  
 Still looking for her love. Until, at last,  
 By the old chapel of the Van, they laid  
 Her mortal body and undying hope.

The years slipped by, the undelaying  
 years,  
 And one by one they passed, the young  
 and old  
 Who knew the story ; scarcely one was  
 left  
 To tell of Rhydderch or his fate ; the  
 world  
 Rolled round upon its course ; young  
 lives were born,  
 Grew ripe, and faded ; many a youth  
 and maid  
 Came careless, rapt in love, and read  
 the stone  
 Which told of Gwen, nor knew what  
 powers of ill  
 Blighted her life and hope, for never  
 more

The elfin music sounded on the leas  
 Since that dread night of Yule. Another  
     race,  
 With other hopes and fears, was on  
     the earth,  
 And the old vanished hopes, and fears,  
     and loves,  
 Were gone, clean gone, like mist upon  
     the hills.

\* \* \* \*

Then, one fair summer morning,  
     from the cave  
 Where, on that sad night four score  
     years ago,  
 His footsteps strayed, Rhydderch came  
     forth again  
 In all the pride of youth. His heart  
     beat high  
 With love and hope, nor felt he any  
     change,  
 More than he feels, who, a brief month  
     or more,  
 Leaves his loved home. His longing  
     heart was full ;  
 He listened to the joyous notes of song  
 Which the gay thrushes sang, as when  
     he went  
 To meet his love. Slow Nature showed  
     no change,  
 The old oaks seemed the same, his  
     sweetheart's home  
 The same, or hardly changed. The  
     bitter Past  
 Touched him no more, who for the  
     Future looked  
 And recompense of love. There were  
     the graves  
 Beneath the yew, where he in happy  
     tryst  
 Had lingered with his love when moon-  
     rise came,  
 As soon he should again. "He had  
     been ill,

Entranced, and the good folk who  
     tended him,  
 He knew not where, made light of the  
     long weeks  
 Which lay 'tween him and health.  
     When he was there  
 'Twas Yule-tide, now 'twas May." He  
     raised his eyes  
 To see if there, where then it used to  
     wait,  
 A girl's form waited. Something gray  
     was there,  
 Half-hidden beneath the yew. Was  
     it herself ?  
 He vaulted o'er the wall, and found—a  
     stone  
 Gray touched by time, and graven on  
     it deep  
 In words half-hid by lichen, the sweet  
     name  
 Of her he loved, "Died, aged three-  
     score years,"  
 And in some strange year, forty years  
     to come.

Then not so much a sense of grief  
     and pain  
 Took him as fear. He knew not what  
     had been ;  
 He knew not what he was. His  
     throbbing pulse  
 Grew slower at the chill cold touch of  
     fate,  
 And great perplexity and new-born  
     doubt,  
 And some half-consciousness of long-  
     dead years,  
 As of a dream, enchained him. Soon  
     he thought  
 The mists would vanish, leaving all  
     things clear,  
 And then the love, the passion of his  
     youth



Once more would live again. So,  
 eagerly  
 He left the place of graves, and took  
 his way  
 Along the well-known paths, to where  
 he saw,  
 In the old spot—the same, yet not the  
 same—  
 The roof-tree of Pantannas. Not as  
 yet  
 Had he seen human face, and a new  
 fear  
 Came on him, and strange shame, as  
 of one come  
 From other air than earth's ; for now  
 he knew  
 That either he was dazed and weak of  
 brain,  
 Or some great change had passed upon  
 his life,  
 Which nothing but the gaze of human  
 eyes  
 And the remembered tones of human  
 speech  
 Might ever again dispel. And so he  
 went  
 Up the old path, and gained the well-  
 known door,  
 And in the old room stood again and  
 mused,  
 Changed—yet the same ; but human  
 face or voice  
 He saw not. All the people were  
 afield,  
 Nor was there any there to see or hear  
 Of those he knew of old. Then, when  
 the load  
 Of silence grew too great, through the  
 still house,  
 In his high youthful voice, he called for  
 one,  
 His childish serving boy, who always  
 loved

To follow him, whether with horse or  
 hound,  
 All day upon the hills, " Ifan, 'tis I,  
 I have come back, 'Deuwch yma.'"  
 The high voice  
 Through the void space resounding  
 clear, at last  
 Echoed to where, within a sunny nook,  
 Bent double with the weight of ninety  
 years,  
 There dozed an aged man, half deaf,  
 half blind,  
 And when he heard, his limbs began to  
 shake,  
 And he to mutter to himself ; again  
 It came, the old man trembled to his  
 feet ;  
 The third time came the cry, and then  
 in haste,  
 Tottering, the aged figure, bowed and  
 bent,  
 Moved quickly to the door, and there  
 beheld  
 His long-lost master, fair in youthful  
 bloom,  
 Unchanged, and in his habit as he was  
 When all the world was young.  
 The old man's heart  
 Went out to him, who stood unmoved,  
 untouched,  
 Not knowing whom he saw. One word  
 alone  
 He uttered, " Rhydderch."  
 And with a flash of light  
 The Past revealed itself. The youth  
 knew all  
 That had been, reading in another's face  
 The unnoted flight of Time. His life  
 was done ;  
 He knew it now. All his old longings  
 dead ;  
 Dust was his love, and all his yearnings  
 dust ;

Dust was his life, and all his body dust.  
 No more upon the old earth could he  
     bear  
 To walk amid the light of garish day,  
 And when the white-haired man, with  
     tears of joy,  
 Would fain have kissed his hand, the  
     Life in Death  
 Shrank from the Death in Life, and  
     fading, left  
 Naught but a thin dust, lost in empty  
     air.

Thus side by side they move, the Lives  
     of Toil  
 And Fancy. What is Fancy but the  
     Past  
 Or Future, bathed in light which never  
     shone,  
 Or shall, upon the earth, and yet which  
     shows  
 Nearer than real Life, and clearer far—  
 A Life wherein the terror of the world,  
 Its mystery, its awe, its boundless  
     hope,  
 Are plainer than in ours, wherein the  
     pang  
 Of hopeless longing and unmerited pain  
 Which vex our thought, the blind un-  
     equal lot  
 Which takes us, find some vague apo-  
     logy,  
 And hope some dim fulfilment, and the  
     ways  
 Of Fate are justified, the righteous rise,  
 The wicked fall? Die not, oh sacred  
     star  
 Of Fancy! Show us still the charm,  
     the awe,  
 The glamour of our lives, bitterer  
     griefs,

Joys keener than our own; loftier  
     heights,  
 Depths deeper still: keep mystery,  
     which is  
 The nurse of knowledge, shading from  
     the glare  
 Of the full noontide sun, our tree of  
     Life?

## TO A GAY COMPANY.

A GRASSY little knoll I know,  
 Before the windows of my home,  
 Where, when the chill days longer  
     grow,  
 And the slow Spring has come,

Forth gleams a golden company  
 Of lowly blossoms through the grass,  
 Smiling a welcome back to me  
 As the soft Spring days pass.

Daily they take the cloudless sun;  
 With innocent faces free from guile,  
 And a sweet yearning never done,  
 They look on him and smile.

And while he shines, the livelong day,  
 From early morn to failing light,  
 Stands patiently the dense array,  
 Content and smiling bright.

But if cold rain or wintry hail  
 Touch them, the careful petals fold,  
 Safe where no violence may assail  
 Their shining cups of gold.

Oh, silent, innocent choir! I seem  
 To hear your fairy voices rise,  
 Extolling faint, as in a dream,  
 Your great Lord in the skies;

And read in your wide-opened eyes  
 Strange thoughts and human histories,  
 Till from your humble lives seems  
     grown  
 Life fairer than your own.

Fair celandines, I love to see  
 Each year your radiant company  
 Bloom golden on the springing grass,  
 As the quick seasons pass.

No careless foot shall come to mar  
 Your peaceful lives, while life is mine;  
 Still as the Spring-tide comes shall  
     shine  
 Each multitudinous star,

So like the others, and the dead  
 Dear blossoms of forgotten Mays,  
 The joyous Springs which now are fled,  
 The wondering childish days

When you, a joyous company,  
 Or yours, were of an age with me;  
 When marvels filled the earth and sky,  
 Nor you could fade, nor I.

Still shall I seem to hear your voice  
 Of joyous praise, though all be still;  
 The Spring-time, bidding all rejoice,  
 Through you and me shall thrill.

Whether we be alive on earth,  
 Or lying hidden in the mould,  
 The Spring shall come with throes of  
     birth,  
 And clothe the fields with gold.

And me, whom the same Maker made,  
 Shall no renewal touch? Shall I  
 Beyond all hope decay and fade?  
 Deeper than Spring-tide lie?

Nay, nay! the sun shines overhead,  
 The Spring-tide calls, the winter's  
     done;  
 At last, from close depths dark and  
     dread,  
 I, too, shall greet the Sun.

### FROM JUVENAL.

I READ to-day a Poet dead  
 In old Rome, centuries ago;  
 Once more returned the days long fled,  
 The dried-up waters seemed to flow.

Once more the keen tongue known in  
     youth  
 Lashed the gross vices of the time,  
 Portraying with a dreadful truth  
 The sloughs of sense, the deeps of  
     crime.

Great city of the World! were these  
 All that the race has gained of thee—  
 Foul lusts and soulless luxuries,  
 Fraud, bloodshed, depths of villany?

Was this what we have left of Rome,  
 This blood-stained sink of dark  
     offence?

Nay, still across the ages come  
 The high pure tones of innocence:

"Let nothing ever, base to see or hear,  
 Pass the chaste threshold, where a  
     young soul is;  
 The innocence of boyhood, oh, reverse,  
 Lest what of vileness you conceive be  
     his.

"Despise not thou his pure and tender  
     youth,  
 But let his weakness stand 'twixt  
 thee and wrong."

Not wholly wert thou dumb, dread  
voice of Truth !  
Nor lost, oh sacred ministry of Song !

IGHTHAM NOTE.

THE gray house from the moat around  
Rises four-square ; two white swans  
glide ;  
A falling stream's uncertain sound  
Is heard on every side.

A home in an untroubled land,  
As 'twas at first it is to-day ;  
Unchanged the hushed quadrangles  
stand,  
Through centuries past away.

The drawbridge and the entrance tower  
Are still as in those good old days,  
Ere freedom baffled lawless power,  
Which dullards love to praise.

So old, so gray, so ripe with time —  
Ere the broad cedars on the grass  
Came from some new-discovered clime  
It saw the centuries pass.

So old and yet so new ; to-day  
Flowers of Japan, in gold and white,  
Its builders dreamt not of, make bright  
Its gradual decay.

And rounding into leafy bowers  
The laurustinus' bulk is spread ;  
A tall tree bending overhead  
Its delicate wealth of flowers.

And over every moss-grown stone  
A glamour of the dead is cast—  
The charm of days deceased and done,  
The phantoms of the Past.

A home, a hundred homes in one,  
Before our English race grew great,  
Before the doughty deeds were done  
Which fixed her glorious fate ;

Before the dauntless Buccaneers  
From Devon dared the Western seas,  
And drove the sullen Don in fear,  
And robbed his argosies ;

Before the White Rose and the Red,  
Ere Crecy proved our England's might,  
When scarce the Paynim learnt to  
dread  
The steel-clad Northern knight.

A hundred tales of good and ill,  
Of love and right, of hate and wrong,  
The joyance and the dole which fill  
The treasure-house of song.

The old knights with their mail were  
here,  
The dames demure with high-built hair,  
The grave ruffed sage, the cavalier  
Flaunting his lovelocks fair,

The periwigged and powdered Beau,  
The Dame with hoops and patches  
brave ;

The generations come and go—  
The cradle and the grave.

Our grandsires and our granddames  
came ;

They came awhile, their times are  
dead,

And we, the modern sir and dame,  
Are reigning in their stead.

Unchanged the old grange stands, and  
will  
When we in turn are past and gone ;

The hurrying years flit by us still,  
Life glides unnoticed on.

And what the end? No Goth or  
Hun  
Can blot the record of thy past ;  
Shalt thou, unchanged, untroubled,  
last  
Till history be done ?

The peasants spared thee, the long  
shock  
Of warring Roses came not near ;  
The Roundhead and the Cavalier,  
The King's head on the block,

Thou hast survived. Shall peace o'er-  
turn

What banded foemen deigned to spare,  
In some deep hate, when all things fair  
In one red ruin burn ?

Or shall a wider faith and trust  
Bind all, until men recognize  
No good but mutual sacrifice,  
Nor aim but to be just ?

Thou liest within the net of Fate,  
Oh ancient England of our love !  
Howe'er the circling world may move,  
Thou art, thou hast been great !

### THE SECRET OF THINGS.

DID the Race of men descend from a Nature sublime,  
From a type which is higher than man and almost divine,  
Sinking from higher to lower through aeons of time,  
Through a hopeless decay and slow unmeasured decline ?

Whence came, then, this downward force to degrade what God gave ?  
Can we rest in the thought that we fell from a higher estate ?  
Shall the work of His hand grow weaker in time and fade,  
And that which was once above death, sink down to the grave ?

And if we are born with the seeds of a deep decay,  
Can it ever be stayed, though it were by an Infinite Will ;  
Or are all things fated to fade and diminish away  
Through all stages of lower life till Creation lies still ?

Or if power there be to stay, and willing for good,  
Where then shall be set the limit of gradual shame ?  
Not there, maybe, where we think, nor then when we would,  
And how shall our being reascend to the height whence we came ?

Or shall this faith rather be ours, that the Infinite Plan  
Is worked by a gradual miracle bettering the Race,  
Since the quickening Spirit breathed on the sea's dead face,  
And the faint life stirred, which one day should blossom in Man ?

It were liker, indeed, to the work of an Infinite Might  
To raise all the gradual Past from lower to higher ;  
Nay, but where, were it thus, were there room for the heaven-sent light  
That, 'midst growing darkness shining, could bid us aspire ?

And what were our profit to rise from the general shame,  
If we knew that the Race were doomed to a deeper decay,  
Or if millions of lives that are past should wither on flame,  
Nor rise from the darkness of Hell to a Heavenly day ?

And does not all Nature teem, not only with types that ascend,  
But with those their ineffable fates from a higher ideal degrade,  
High archetypes dwindling down, which from higher to lower tend,  
Keen organs, and powers of might, which to feeble energies fade ?

Great Universe, what is thy Secret, what are thy Laws ?  
Do they dwindle through secular time by the power of an Infinite Will ?  
Or do all things to Perfectness tend by a changeless ordinance still,  
Impelled by the upward force of an inborn Beneficent Cause ?

But if such were the law of things, how then should any ignore  
The self-same embryo growth of man and the lowest ape,  
Which an inborn necessity moulds to such difference of being and shape,  
That one rises to godlike discourse, one lies soulless for evermore ?

Or shall we believe, indeed, that deep down in the covering earth  
May be found, some day, a trace of a Being that once has been,  
Which in long-dead æons of time was parent of either birth,  
And, in Nature's gradual scheme, stood centred and fixed between ?

Can the Individual rise, though the Race sinks down in disgrace,  
And, while all is ruined beside, increase to a heavenly height ?  
Can the Individual sink to some dark, ineffable place,  
While the Race rises higher and higher in face of the Infinite Light ?

Is the soul of Humanity one with the Individual soul ?  
Shall each rise with the other or sink, as the suns are illumined or fade ?  
Shall the hand of the Maker show weak as the æons unchangeably roll,  
Grown helpless to stay the wreck of the Cosmos itself hath made ?

Nay, from out of the House of despair shall be heard a jubilant voice,  
Beneath the deepest depths and hopeless abysses of Ill,  
Which in comical accents immense, bids all things living rejoice,  
And out of the pit of Hell strive onward and upward still.

*OH, EARTH!*

Oh, earth ! that liest still to-night  
 Beneath the starlit skies,  
 How splendid dost thou loom and  
 bright  
 To planetary eyes !

But if some storm-cloud, vast and dark,  
 Should hide thee from the day ;  
 If through blind night no faintest spark  
 Should force its feeble way,

No other would thy face appear,  
 Than on this cloudless sky,  
 Though all the world should quake  
 with fear,  
 Though all our race should die.

Great Universe ! too vast thou art,  
 Too changeless and too far,  
 Dull grows the brain and chill the  
 heart  
 Before the nearest star.

Oh, kindly earth ! upon thy breast  
 For ever let me lie,  
 Wrapt round with thy eternal rest,  
 But gazing on the sky.

*ON A BIRTHDAY.*

WHAT shall be written of the man  
 Who through life's mingled hopes and  
 fears  
 Touches to-day our little span  
 Of seventy years ;

Who, with force undiminished still,  
 A Nestor stands among his peers,  
 Full of youth's fire and dauntless will  
 At seventy years ;

Who knows no creeping chill of age,  
 But, rich in all which life endears,  
 Keeps still the patriot's noble rage  
 Through seventy years,

The form unbent, the flashing eye,  
 The curious lore, the wit that cheers,  
 The scorn of wrong which can defy  
 His seventy years ;

To whom no wound which mars the  
 state,  
 No humblest neighbour's grief or tears,  
 Appeal in vain for love or hate  
 These seventy years ;

For whom home's happy radiance yet  
 A steadfast beacon-fire appears,  
 Bright through the storms, the stress,  
 the fret  
 Of seventy years ;—

What else but this ? “ Brave heart, be  
 strong,  
 Be of good hope ; life holds no fears,  
 Nor death, for him who strives with  
 wrong  
 For seventy years.

Live, labour, spread that sacred light  
 Of knowledge which thy soul reveres ;  
 Fight still the old victorious fight  
 Of seventy years.

Live, labour, ripen to fourscore  
 While still the listening Senate hears ;  
 Live till new summers blossom o'er  
 These seventy years.

Or if a brighter briefer lot  
 Withdraw thee from thy country's  
 tears,  
 Be sure there is where change is not,  
 Nor age, nor years.”

IN A LABORATORY.

A MOST intelligent dog I took,  
Affectionate, full of caressing grace,  
With something of human love in his  
look,

And such a trustful, half-human face.

I had learnt tricks, too—would give you  
a paw

Where a brother-savant would offer a  
hand,

Right or left, as you asked him ; could  
understand

Your speech—it might almost fill one  
with awe,

Seeing how near to mankind, yet how  
far

These dumb and pitiful creatures are ;  
How all their faith and belief and love  
Is centred in Man as a Lord above.

And looking into his eyes for awhile,  
For knowledge is precious and gained  
through pain,

I bound him down with a pitying smile,  
And deftly removed the left lobe of his  
brain.

And then, with all that I had of skill,  
I healed it again, so that presently,  
Though lame and sick, in his love for  
me,

The creature strove to obey my will.

And when I asked him to give me a paw,  
He gave the left first, but when for  
the right

I asked, his maimed brain failing him  
quite,

Gave the left—and I thought I had  
touched a Law.

So I persevered, and the brute again,  
With a loving, sorrowful look of pain,  
Brought the left paw over the helpless  
right,

And I marked the effort, with deep  
delight.

And having pushed knowledge so far,  
again

I divided the opposite lobe of the brain,  
And the poor brute, though willing to  
offer a paw,

Could no longer obey—and I grasped  
a Law.

Later on, still athirst for knowledge,  
once more

I carved the weak brain, as I did  
before,

Till the poor dumb wretch, as he lay  
on his side,

With a loving look regarding me, died.

Poor brute ! may his pain be for know-  
ledge, and I,

If I grasp not the clue, yet I may by-  
and-by.

Strange how weak Man is, and infirm  
of will,

For sometimes I see him and shudder  
still !

THE SUMMONS.

MARCH 28, 1884.

AWAY from love of child and wife,  
From the first flush of ripening life,  
From books and Art, from all things  
fair,

From homely joys, from public care,  
A low voice summons us away,  
And prince and peasant must obey.



Sometimes amid the noonday throng,  
Amid the feast, the dance, the song,  
Amid the daily wholesome round,  
The inevitable accents sound,  
And the ear hears the summons come  
As his who calls the truant home.

And sometimes in the lonely night  
It sounds and brings with it the light.  
Alone, with none but strangers nigh,  
Comes the cold voice which bids us die;  
Sudden, or after months of pain,  
And weary vigils spent in vain.

What shall it bring of profit then  
To have loomed large in the eyes of  
men?  
Or what of comfort shall endure,  
Save soaring thoughts and memories  
pure?  
Nought else of thoughts and things that  
be  
Can solace that great misery.

Oh dreadful summons, full of fear  
For weakling mortal souls to hear!  
When that last moment shall be ours,  
'Mid failing brain and sinking powers,  
May one great strength our steps  
attend,  
The constant presence of a Friend.

### SILVERN SPEECH.

THERE are whom Fate's obscure decree  
Dooms in deep solitude to be;  
For whom no word that mortal spake  
The sullen silence comes to break;  
And e'en the music of the Spheres  
Falls only on unheeding ears.  
For them, life's loud processions seem  
A noiseless and unmeaning dream.

Around their prison, joyous life  
Echoes with noise of fruitful strife.  
Yet, to their cells no sound may come,  
But all the universe is dumb.  
Ah! strange that while all things  
rejoice

Man only should be wanting voice!  
Ah! strange that morning-song of bird  
By living ears is never heard!  
Nor mighty master-music dim,  
Nor Heaven-thrilled note of soaring  
hymn,

Nor rippling laugh of happy child,  
Nor the Deep's thunder-voices wild!  
Unreached by life's tumultuous sound  
Even as the dead, beneath the ground.  
And still, though all creation groan,  
Unmoved in loneliness alone.

Ah, cruel fate! unequal doom  
That sinks the innocent in gloom!  
What first the depths of chaos stirred  
But the Ineffable Spoken Word?  
What else our inmost souls can reach  
Like that Divinest Gift of Speech?  
Ah, hapless fate that thus deprives  
Of half their life unconscious lives!  
Ah! could a soft compassion gain  
To soothe the victim's lonely pain!

What if with knowledge, love combined,  
Can wake the undeveloped mind,  
And without speech or sound can teach  
The use of sound alike and speech;  
To those dumb solitudes profound  
Convey some blessed ghost of sound,  
And kindle from the dormant sense  
Bright sparks of new intelligence;  
Assist the undeveloped brain  
New loftier summits to attain,  
Till knowledge grow the guide of  
love,  
And love turned Heavenward point  
above;

And the illumined soul confess  
The innate love of Righteousness !  
Surely a miracle it is  
Which works so blest a change as this !

THE OBELISK.

UPON the river side,  
Above the turbid stream,  
Which rolls on, deep and wide ;  
Strange as a dream,

The obelisk defies  
Its dim unnumbered years,  
Facing the murky skies,  
Their snows, their tears.

Three thousand years it stood  
Upon the sweet, broad Nile,  
And watched the gliding flood,  
The blue skies smile.

And many a century more,  
Where it of old would stand,  
It lay half covered o'er  
By the hot sand.

Now with signs graven deep,  
In this our Northern Isle,  
Where the skies often weep  
And seldom smile,

Once more again it rears  
Its dim, discrowned head,  
Though all those countless years  
Its life is dead.

Forgotten is the lore  
Its mystic symbols keep ;  
Its builders evermore  
Sleep their last sleep.

Amid this Northern air,  
Beyond the storm-lost sea,  
Where earth nor sky is fair,  
Why shouldst thou be ?

Standing amidst the strife,  
The modern city's roar,  
Memorial of a life  
Dead evermore,

And of the end of all  
That shows to-day so strong,  
The greatness that shall fall,  
After how long ?

The city which to-day  
Shows mightier than thy own,  
Which yet shall pass away,  
Like thine o'erthrown.

And thou ? Where shalt thou be  
When Time has ruined all,  
And Faith and Empery  
Together fall ?

Shalt thou at last find rest  
Beneath the river's flow,  
And mark upon its breast  
New ages grow ?

Or shall some unborn race  
Take thee as prize of war,  
And set thee up to grace  
New cities far ?

Or shall our Northern frost,  
Our chill and weeping skies,  
Sap thee, till thou art lost  
To mortal eyes ?

The Past it is, the Past  
Whose ghost thou comest here ;  
The years fleet by us fast,  
The end draws near.

But while the Present flies  
The far-off Past survives ;  
It lives, it never dies,  
In newborn lives.

It lives, it never dies,  
And we the outcome are  
Of countless centuries &  
And ages far.

What if our thought might see  
The Future ere it rise,  
The ages that shall be,  
Before our eyes ;

And if incorporate,  
Graven by some mystic hand,  
Our hieroglyph of Fate  
By thine might stand ?

Nay, nay, our Future shows  
Implicitly in thee ;  
For well the thinker knows  
What was, shall be.

And though a ghost thou art,  
'Tis well that thou art here  
To touch each careless heart  
With hope and fear.

### A SONG OF EMPIRE.

JUNE 20, 1887.

FIRST Lady of our English race,  
In Royal dignity and grace  
Higher than all in old ancestral blood,  
But higher still in love of good,  
And care for ordered Freedom, grown  
To a great tree where'er  
In either hemisphere,  
Its vital seeds are blown ;

Where'er with every day begun  
Thy English bugles greet the coming  
sun !

Thy life is England's. All these fifty  
years  
Thou from thy lonely Queenly place  
Hast watched the clouds and sunshine  
on her face ;  
Hast marked her changing hopes and  
fears ;  
Her joys and sorrows have been always  
thine ;  
Always thy quick and Royal sympathy  
Has gone out swiftly to the humblest  
home,  
Wherever grief and pain and suffering  
come.

Therefore it is that we  
Take thee for head and symbol of our  
name.  
For fifty years of reign thou wert the  
same,  
Therefore to-day we make our jubilee.  
Firm set on ancient right, as on thy  
people's love,  
Unchecked thy wheels of empire on-  
ward move.  
Not as theirs is thy throne  
Who, though their hapless subjects  
groan,  
Sit selfish, caring not at all,  
Until the fierce mob surges and they fall,  
Or the assassin sets the down-trod free.  
Not such thy fate on this thy jubilee,  
But love and reverence in the hearts of  
all.

Oh England ! Empire wide and great  
As ever from the shaping hand of fate  
Did issue on the earth, august, large  
grown !

What were the Empires of the past to  
thine,  
The old old Empires ruled by kings  
divine—  
Egypt, Assyria, Rome? What rule  
was like thine own,  
Who over all the round world bearest  
sway?  
Not those alone who thy commands  
obey  
Thy subjects are ; but in the boundless  
West  
Our grandsires lost, still is thy reign  
confest.  
“ The Queen ” they call thee, the young  
People strong,  
Who, being Britons, might not suffer  
wrong,  
But are reknit with us in reverence for  
thee ;  
Therefore it is we make our jubilee.

See what a glorious throng they come,  
Turned to their ancient home,  
The children of our England! See  
What vigorous company  
Thou sendest, Greater England of the  
Southern Sea!  
Thy stately cities, sown with domes  
and spires,  
Chase the illumined night with festal fires  
In honour of their Queen, whose happy  
reign  
Began when, 'mid their central roar,  
The naked savage trod the pathless  
plain.  
Thousands of miles, North, South,  
East, West, to-day,  
Their countless herds and flocks un-  
numbered stray.  
Theirs are the vast primeval forest  
depths profound ;  
Yet everywhere are found

The English laws, the English accents  
fair,  
'Mid burning North or cooler Southern  
air.  
A world within themselves, and with  
them blent  
Island with continent.  
The green ~~ales~~ jewels on the tropic  
blue,  
Where flower and tree and bird are  
strange and new ;  
Or that which lies within a temperate  
air  
As summer-England fair ;  
Or those, our Southern Britain that  
shall be,  
Set in the lonely sea.  
Lands of deep fiord and snow-clad  
soaring hill,  
Where-through the ocean-currents ebb  
and fill,  
And craters vast, from which the  
prisoned force  
Of the great earth-fires runs its dreadful  
course.  
And vales of fern and palm, whence  
rising like a dream  
High in mid-heaven, the ghostly ice-  
fields gleam.

And from her far and wintry North  
The great Dominion issues forth,  
Fit nurse of stalwart British hearts and  
strong ;  
From her black pine woods, deep in  
snow,  
Her billowy prairies boundless as the  
sea,  
Where on the sweet untroubled soil  
Yearly the unnoticed, countless wild-  
flowers blow,  
And by men's fruitful and compelling  
toil

<p>Yearly the deep and bounteous harvests grow ; From the lone plains, o'er which the icy wind Sweeps from the North, leaving the Pole behind ; In whose brief summer suns, so fierce they shine, Flourish alike the apple and the vine ; From teeming ancient cities bright and fair, Whether in summer's heat or frosty wintry air, Stamped with the nameless charm and grace (Of a more joyous race ; Or on the rounding prairie nestling down Homestead and frequent new-built town. Even to those ultimate wilds where comes to be Another Westminster on the Pacific Sea.</p> <p>Nor shall thy Western Isles Be wanting, where the high green breakers fall Upon the torrid shore, and nature smiles ; And yet sometimes broods over all, Thick woods and hot lagunes with steaming breath, A nameless presence with a face of death. Fair balmy Isles, where never wintry air Ruffles the scentless tropic blossoms fair, Upon whose sun-warmed fruitful soil Our father's dusky freedmen toil. Lands of bright plumes that flash from tree to tree,</p>	<p>Long creepers trailing thick with brilliant bloom, And loud upon the forest's silent gloom The plunging surges of the encircling sea.</p> <p>And from the ancient land Scorching beneath the strong unfailing sun, Round thee thy unnumbered subject millions stand ; From many-a storied city fair, Old ere our England, first begun, From marble tomb and temple white, Built ere our far forefathers were, And still a miracle defying Time ; Palaces gray with age and dark with crime, Fierce superstitions, only quenched in blood, And sweet flower-fancies yearning towards the light, And lustral cleansings in the sacred flood, Where by dim temple cool, or shaded street, From hill or parched plain the wayworn pilgrims meet.</p> <p>And from the unhappy Continent Which breeds the savage and the slave— From our enormous South, there shall be sent A scanty band of strong self-governed men. And from those poisoned swamps, to- day a grave, But which one day shall smile with plenty, when The onward foot of Knowledge, slow, sublime,</p>
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Has traversed her and set her children  
free  
From ocean to her fabulous inland  
sea,  
And the fierce savage, full of kingly  
grace,  
Is father of a gentler race,  
And peaceful commerce heals the  
wounds of Time,  
And the long history of blood and pain  
Comes nevermore again.

And nearer to thee still; and dearer  
yet,  
Thy people of these little Northern  
Isles,  
Who never shall their Queen forget,  
Nor be forgotten, whether Fortune  
smiles  
Or armed Europe storm around.  
Whom none assail, beyond the waves'  
deep sound,  
Behind their surge-struck ramparts safe  
and free.  
These are thy closest subjects, these  
The brain and heart of Empire, as thy  
Rose  
Within its close-ranged petals comes to  
hold  
A perfumed heart of gold,  
Wherein the seed of the miraculous  
flower,  
Safe hid, defies Fate's power.  
And most of all thy wondrous mother-  
town  
Upon our broad Thames sitting like a  
crown;  
Who, 'mid her healthful labour-laden  
air,  
Grows every day more fair:  
Whom not for fairness do her children  
prize,  
But for her gracious homely memories—

A nation, not a city, the loved home  
Where to the longing thoughts of exiled  
Britons come!

What is it that their voices tell?  
What is it that in naming thee they  
praise?  
Not wider empire only; that is well.  
But there are worthier triumphs,  
peaceful days,  
Just laws, a people happier than before,  
And rolling on untroubled evermore,  
With larger stream, and fuller and more  
free  
The tide of ordered liberty.  
These things than empire higher are,  
Higher and nobler far.

Our old Draconic Law  
With children's blood cemented, no  
more kills  
Its tale of innocent victims. Pitying  
Love  
Amid the abjects deigns to-day to  
move  
Whom no man cared for. If the cruel  
city  
Still claims its thousands, by the out-  
casts stand  
Pure men and women in a gentle hand,  
Linked in a ministry of Love and  
Pity.

No more the insensate State  
Binds down the worker, to exaggerate  
The unequal gifts of Fate,  
But comes instead, some care for  
common good,  
Some glimmering sense of growing  
brotherhood.  
No more half deafened by the unresting  
loom,  
Soulless as is the brute, the pallid  
children pine;

Nor hapless slaves, half naked, 'mid the  
gloom  
And grime and squalor of the sunless  
mine,  
The young girl-workers coarsen, but all  
take  
Some modest gleam of knowledge,  
which may breed  
The faith that is above, yet under,  
every creed,  
And of these humble lives, one day  
shall make  
True citizens indeed.

Nor shall thy peoples' voice  
Keep silence of the salutary change  
Which brought the gift of fullest  
freedom down  
To humble lives, whether by field or  
town ;  
The potent gift, and strange,  
Which wakes alone the wider civic  
sense,  
Which, more than knowledge, sobers  
heart and mind,  
And rich and poor in closer ties can  
bind,  
And knits a nation firm in harmony !  
Let civil broils and fiercer dissidence  
Come—we are one. What care have  
we ?  
In speech, in action, we are free.  
No mob law need we fear, or senseless  
anarchy,  
And for all these rejoice.

What law for us has done,  
For all our greater England 'neath the  
sun,  
Let us do now, building on high a  
State  
Of half the World confederate !

Sure, 'twere the noblest victory of  
mind  
Thy scattered realms to bind ;  
To guide the toiling, hopeless feet  
To where is work for all, and life is  
sweet ;  
To teach our millions their great  
heritage,  
To call together high world-councils  
sage,  
Strong as the Priest's, in this our  
island-home ;  
Then, though the armed world shall  
come,  
What care, what fear, have we,  
Who, being free, are one ; and, being  
one, are free ?

If all the wide Earth brings our  
millions food,  
And if our navies whiten every sea,  
If we have rest and wider brotherhood,  
All these began with thee ;  
And shall, if Heaven so will, still more  
increase  
With thy remaining years, till blessed  
Peace,  
Half frightened from us now by grave  
alarms  
Of half a world in arms,  
Shall brood, a white-winged Angel,  
o'er the Earth.  
Then may the rule of Wrong be  
done !  
Then may a new and Glorious Sun  
Gild the illumined World ! and then  
Come Righteousness to men !

Three sovereigns of our English line  
Have reached thy length of rule, each  
of his name the third,  
But never England's heart was stirred  
By those as 'tis by thine.

Our Henry died lonely and girt with  
foes ;  
Our greater Edward fell in dotage ere  
life's close ;  
And he thy grandsire knew a troublous  
time,  
A dim pathetic figure ! full of pain  
And care too great for mortal to  
sustain,  
And in his rayless sorrow grown  
sublime !

Three Queens have swayed  
Our England's fortunes--great Eliza-  
beth.  
In whose brave times the blast of war  
blew loud and fierce and far.  
Her dauntless sailors dared the un-  
bounded West,  
And fought the Armada's night, and  
did prevail,  
And wheresoe'er was seen an English  
sail  
Her Empire was confest ;  
And round her gracious throne immortal  
flowers of song  
Bloomed beautiful, bloomed long,  
And left our English tongue as sweet  
as it was strong.

And when a century and more had  
passed  
In blood and turmoil, came a Queen  
at last.  
Her soldiers and her sailors once again  
Conquered on tented field and on the  
main,  
And once more rose the choir of song ;  
Not as the Elizabethan, deep and  
strong,  
But, tripping lightly on its jewelled  
feet,  
Issued politely sweet,

And Shakespeare's tongue and Milton's  
learned to dance  
The minuet of France.

And now again once more  
A Queen reigns o'er us as before ;  
Again by land and sea  
We cast the chequered sum of victory.  
Once more our English tongue  
Wakes to unnumbered bursts of song.  
A great choir lifts again its accents fair,  
And to those greater singers, if we find  
To-day no answering mind,  
'Tis that too large the Present fills the  
view,  
Yet has its great names too.  
Part of the glorious fellowship are we,  
The great Victorian company,  
Which, since old Caedmon's deep voice  
carolled strong,  
Through England's chequered story  
bore along  
The high pure fire of the world's  
sweetest song.

But not in the increase  
Of Empire, or the victories of peace,  
Chiefly we seek thy praise.  
But that thy long and gracious days,  
Lived in the solitude that hems a throne,  
Since thy great sorrow came and left  
thee lone,  
Were ever white, and free from thought  
of blame.  
Not once in thy long years shadow of  
envy came  
On thee, or him, whose stainless man-  
hood bore  
Thy love's unfading flower. Never  
before  
In all our England was a royal home  
Whereto the loving thoughts of humble  
hearts might come.



Thy children's children stand around  
thy knees,  
Their children come in turn as fair as  
these ;  
Thy people and thy children turn to  
thee,  
Knit all in one by bonds of sympathy  
With thee, our Queen, art we ;  
Therefore we make our solemn jubilee !

Flash, festal fires, high on the joyous  
air !  
Clash, joy-bells ! joy-guns, roar ! and,  
jubilant trumpets, blare !  
Let the great noise of our rejoicing  
rise !  
Gleam, long-illuminated cities, to the  
skies  
Round all the earth, in every clime,  
So far your distance half confuses time !  
As in the old Judæan history,  
Fling wide the doors and set the  
prisoners free !  
Wherever England is o'er all the world,  
Fly, banner of Royal England, stream  
unfurled !  
The proudest Empire that has been, to-  
day  
Rejoices and makes solemn jubilee.  
For England ! England ! we our voices  
raise !  
Our England ! England ! England ! in  
our Queen we praise !  
We love not war, but only peace,  
Yet never shall our England's power  
decrease !  
Whoever guides our helm of State,  
Let all men know it, England shall be  
great !  
We hold a vaster Empire than has  
been !  
Nigh half the race of man is subject to  
our Queen !

Nigh half the wide, wide earth is ours  
in fee !  
And where her rule comes, all are free.  
And therefore 'tis, oh Queen, that we,  
Knit fast in bonds of temperate liberty,  
Rejoice to-day, and, make our solemn  
jubilee !!

## TEMPERANCE.

Whoso can rule his soul  
In prudence still ;  
Who can his heart control,  
His thought, his will ;

Whom, temperate in all,  
Labour and play,  
No low desires enthral  
Nor lead astray ;

Seeking the golden mean,  
To Duty vowed,—  
Ay, though black depths between  
Roar dark and loud ;

He shall new pleasures find,  
More fruitful far  
Than for the undisciplined  
And sensual are ;

A kingdom absolute,  
A wider sway  
Than his whom myriads mute  
And blind obey.

For in his soul one voice  
Alone is heard,  
Which bids his being rejoice,  
One perfect word,

Stronger than heated youth,  
Mightier than wrong—

The Godlike voice of Truth,  
A constant song.

Silence all discords loud  
Within the breast !  
Fly from the troubled crowd  
To peace and rest !

And let the enfranchised soul,  
From self set free,  
Find in Right's dread control  
True Liberty !

THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.

'AN ODE. (JULY 4, 1887.)

With soaring voice and solemn music  
sing !  
High to Heaven's gate let pealing  
trumpets ring !  
To-day our hands consolidate  
The Empire of a thousand years :  
Delusive hopes, distracting fears,  
Have passed and left her great.  
For Britain, Britain, we our jubilant  
anthems raise.  
Uplift your voices all : worthy is she of  
praise !

Our Britain, issuing at the call of Fate  
From her lone islets in the Northern  
Sea,  
Donned her Imperial robe, assumed her  
crowned state,  
Took the sole sceptre of the Free ;  
'Mid clang of arms her crescent glory  
rose,  
By shattered fleet and flaming town :  
Victorious at the last o'er all her foes,  
Embattled rolls her splendid story  
down.

Soldier and seaman, side by side,  
Her strong sons, greatly dared and  
bravely died.  
Close on their steps her dauntless  
toilers went  
O'er unknown sea and pathless conti-  
nent,  
Till when the centuries of strife were  
done  
They left the greatest Realm beneath  
the sun.  
Praise them and her ; your grateful  
voices raise.  
Mother of Freedom ! thou art worthy  
of our praise !

No more we seek our Realm's increase  
By War's red rapine, but by white-  
winged Peace ;  
To-day we seek to bind in one,  
Till all our Britain's work be done —  
Through wider knowledge closer grown,  
As each fair sister by the rest is known,  
And mutual Commerce, mighty to  
efface  
The envious bars of Time and Place,  
Deep-pulsing from a common heart  
And through a common speech ex-  
pressed, —  
From North to South, from East to  
West,  
Our great World Empire's every part ;  
A universal Britain, strong  
To raise up Right and beat down Wrong.  
Let this thing be ! who shall our Realm  
divide ?  
Ever we stand together, Kinsmen, side  
by side !

To-day we would make free  
Our millions of their glorious heritage.  
Here, Labour crowds in hopeless  
misery, —

There, is unbounded work and ready wage.	First Lady of our British race !
The salt breeze, calling, stirs our Northern blood,—	'Tis well that with thy peaceful Jubilee This glorious dream begins to be.
Lead we the toilers to their certain good ;	This thy lost Consort would ; this would thy Son,
Guide we their feet to where Is spread for those who dare	Who has seen all thy Empire face to face And fain would leave it One.
A happier Britain 'neath an ampler air.	Oh, may the Hand which rules our Fate Keep this our Britain great !
Uprise, O Palace fair !	We cannot tell, we can but pray Heaven's blessing on our work to-day.
With ordered knowledge of each far- off land	Uprise, O Palace fair, where every eye may see
For all to understand !	This proud embodied Unity !
Uprise, O Palace fair, where for the Poor shall be	For Britain and our Queen one voice we raise,—
Wise thought and love to guide o'er the dividing sea.	Laud them, rejoice, peal forth : worthy are they of praise ?

## DAVID GWYN.

DAVID GWYN was a Welshman bold who pined a slave in the hulks of Spain,  
Taken years since in some mad emprise with Francis Drake on the Spanish  
main.

Long in that cruel country he shared the captive's bitter and hapless lot ;  
Slowly the dead years passed and left him dreaming still of the days that were  
not,

Of tiny Radnor, or stately Brecknock, or Cardigan's rain-swept heights may  
be,

Or green Caermarthen, or rich Glamorgan, or Pembroke sitting on either  
sea.

Sickening within his squalid prison, while still as the circling seasons came  
The fierce sun beat on the brown Sierras, springtide and summer and autumn  
the same,

Almost hope failed the dauntless sailor, chained in an alien and hateful land,  
Lonely and friendless, starved and buffeted, none to pity or understand,  
Pining always and ageing yearly as slow Time whitened and bowed his head,  
While longing and hate burned high and higher as life sank lower and hope fell  
dead,

With brutes for his gaolers, and fiends for his fellows, chained to him ceaselessly  
night and day,

Eleven autumns, eleven winters wasted their wearisome length away.

Then there awoke round his floating prison clang of hammers and bustle of men ;  
Shipwrights labouring late and early woke old thoughts in his heart again.

" Spain will lay waste your heretic island with fire and sword ere the winter be  
come,

And you and the rest of your felon crew shall row the galleys which sack your  
home."

The hot blood flushed to the prisoner's forehead, but never a word in reply  
said he,

Toiling obediently days and weeks till the great fleet sailed on the summer sea ;  
Splendid galleons towering skyward with gilded masts and with streamers brave,  
Floating proudly to martial music over the blue Lusitanian wave,  
Four great galleys leading the van, and in one midst the close-thronged benches  
sate

David Gwyn, a forgotten oarsman, nursing a burning heart of hate.

So along the windless ocean slow the great Armada sped,  
Two unclouded weeks of summer blazed the hot sun overhead.  
Hourly from the high deck-pulpits preaching rose and chant and prayer,  
And the cloying fumes of incense on the brisk Atlantic air ;  
Courtiers fine and sea-worn sailors jesting the slow hours away,  
Silken sails and blazoned standards flapping idly day by day,  
And within his high poop-turret, more than mortal to behold,  
The High Admiral Medina lounging idly, clothed with gold :  
Not a thought of peril touched them, not a dream of what might come,  
Proudly sailing, sure of conquest, with the benison of Rome,  
And far down among the oarsmen's benches, fainting, desperate,  
David Gwyn, a patriot helpless with a burning heart of hate.

With the roaring Bay of Biscay louder winds and greyer skies,  
And the galleons plunge and labour, and the rolling mountains rise ;  
Blacker loom the drifting storm clouds, fiercer grow the wind and sea,  
Far and wide the galleons scatter, driving, drifting helplessly.  
Higher mount the thundering surges ; tossed to heaven, or fathoms down,  
Rear or plunge the cumbrous galleys while the helpless oarsmen drown.  
Like a diver the *Diana* slides head first beneath the wave,  
Not a soul of all her hundreds may her labouring consorts save.  
Now to larboard, now to starboard, shattered, tost from side to side,  
Helpless rolls the great Armada, shorn of all its pomp and pride.  
Down between those toppling ridges, groaning, straining in his place,  
David Gwyn among the oarsmen sits with triumph in his face.

Then amid the roaring seas, when hope was gone and death was near,  
And the hearts of all the Spaniards sinking, failing them for fear,

Boldly to the haughty Captain, David Gwyn the oarsman went,  
 Veiling with a fearless frankness all the depth of his intent.  
 "Quick, Señor! the ship is sinking; like her consort will she be,  
 Buried soon with slaves and freemen, fathoms deep beneath the sea.  
 Give me leave and I will save her; I have fought the winds before,  
 Fought and conquered storms and foemen many a time on sea and shore."  
 And the haughty Captain, knowing David Gwyn a seaman bold,  
 Since upon the Spanish main the foemen sailed and fought of old,  
 Answered, turning to his prisoner: "Save the ship, and thou shalt gain  
 Freedom from thy life-long fetters, guerdon from the Lord of Spain."  
 Then from out the prisoner's eye there flashed a sudden gleam of flame,  
 And a light of secret triumph o'er his clouded visage came,  
 Thinking of his Cymric homestead and the fair years that were gone,  
 And his glory who should save her from the thraldom of the Don.  
 "I will save your ship," he answered; "trust me wholly, have no fear:  
 Pack the soldiers under hatches; leave the main deck free and clear."  
 Doubting much the Don consented; only, lest the slaves should rise,  
 By each oarsman sat a soldier, watching him with jealous eyes.  
 Little knew he of the cunning, secret signs, and watchwords born  
 Of long years of cruel fetters, stripes and hunger, spite and scorn.  
 Little thought he every prisoner as in misery he sate  
 Hid a dagger in his waistband, waiting for the call of Fate.

David Gwyn, the valiant seaman, long time battled with the main,  
 Till the furious storm-wind slackened and the ship was safe again.  
 Sudden then he gave the signal, raised his arm and bared his head.  
 Every oarsman rising swiftly stabbed his hapless warder dead,  
 Seized his arms, and, fired with conquest, mad with vengeance, like a flood  
 On the crowded 'tween-decks bursting, left the Spaniards in their blood.  
 David Gwyn was now the Captain, and the great ship all his own;  
 Well the slaves obeyed their comrade, thus to sudden greatness grown.  
 Straight for France the stout *Fasana* shaping, sudden on her lee  
 Don Diego in the *Royal*, foaming through the stricken sea,  
 Driven by full four hundred oarsmen, nigh the monstrous galley drew.  
 Then from out her thundering broadside swift the sudden lightning flew;  
 In among Gwyn's crowded seamen straight the hurtling missiles sped;  
 Nine strong sailors in a moment lay around their Captain dead.  
 David Gwyn, the dauntless Captain, turning to his comrades then—  
 "God has given you freedom; earn it: fear not; quit yourselves like men.  
 Lay the ship aboard the *Royal*: free your comrades and be free."  
 The strong oarsmen bent, obedient, rowing swiftly, silently,  
 Till, as if in middle ocean striking on a hidden rock,  
 All the stout *Fasana's* timbers, quivering, reeling with the shock,

Straight on board the crowded *Rays*! leapt that band of desperate men,  
 Freed the slaves, and left no Spaniard who might tell the tale again ;  
 And the sister galleys stately with fair winds sped safely on,  
 Under David Gwyn, their Captain, and cast anchor at Bayonne.  
 And King Henry gave them largesse, and they parted, every one  
 Free once more to his own country, and their evil days were done.

David Gwyn to England coming won the favour of the Queen ;  
 Well her Grace esteemed his valour in the perils that had been.  
 What ! had those swift, mighty galleys, which could wind and tide defy,  
 Winged with speed the slow Armada when our weak fleet hovered by ?  
 Had not then that sullen quarry, ploughing helpless on the plain,  
 Turned and crushed the nimble hunters, and rewrit the fate of Spain ?  
 Who shall tell ? But his were doughty deeds and worthy lasting fame,  
 Though the country he delivered never yet has known his name.

Did he seek again the home of his youth, did he let the years go peacefully by,  
 Breathing the sweet clear air of the hills, till his day was done and he came to die ?  
 By tiny Radnor, or stately Brecknock, or Cardigan's rain-swept heights may be,  
 Or green Caermarthen, or rich Glamorgan, or Pembroke sitting on either sea ?  
 Did he dream sometimes 'mid the nights of storm of those long-dead years in the  
     hulks of Spain,  
 That stealthy onset, that dread revenge, with the wild winds drowning the cries  
     of pain ?  
 Did the old man shudder to think of the blood, when the knife pierced deep to  
     the Spaniard's heart ?  
 Nay, to each of us all is his Life assigned, his Work, his Fate, his allotted Part

## SONG.

FAREWELL ! farewell ! Adown the  
     ways of night \*  
 The red sun sinks, and with him takes  
     the light ;  
 O'er the dull East the gathering shadows  
     grow,  
 And turn to gray the Western after-  
     glow.

Farewell ! farewell ! But Day shall  
     come again ;  
 Shall hope then die, and prayers be  
     breathed in vain ?  
 Our faithful hopes outlive the fleeting  
     day ;  
 Stronger than Life and Death and Time  
     are they.  
 Ah ! see the last faint ray has ceased to  
     flame.  
 Courage ! our parted souls are still the  
     same.

Round is the earth, and round the  
    estranging sea,  
And Time's swift wheel which brings  
    thee back to me.

Come back ! Come back climbing the  
    Eastern sky !  
Our souls are deathless though our flesh  
    shall die.  
Winged are our thoughts, and flash forth  
    swift and far  
Beyond the faint light of the furthest star.

Come back ! or if we meet in some  
    strange place,  
On some dim planet, I shall know thy  
    face ;  
By some weird land, or unimagined sea,  
I shall not be afraid, dear, having thee.

*THE ALBATROSS.*

UPON the lone Australian shore,  
A chance-sent traveller's careless eye,  
Saw a white bird swoop down and lie  
With wide wings that should soar no  
    more.

A feeble quiver shook the bird,  
A film the glazing eye o'erspread ;  
Once more the pearly plumage stirred,  
And then the Albatross was dead.

He spread the giant pinions wide,  
When 'neath the snowy down he found  
By hands unknown securely bound,  
A sea-worn missive safe and sound.

And when the blotted page he read,  
This message bore it from the sea—  
"Five shipwrecked sailors, mourned as  
    dead,  
A thousand miles from land are we ;

"Whoe'er thou art whose hand shall  
    take

Our poor winged messenger, we pray  
That thou wilt spare him for our sake,  
And send him scatheless on his way.

"Hardly we hope our words shall find  
Response, save by some blessed chance :  
Good friend who readest this be kind,  
And speed us to our well-loved France."

The traveller stood and musing read,  
Some new-born pity filled his breast,  
Seeing that poor envoy lie at rest,  
The living speaking thro' the dead.

And soon to save those helpless men,  
A stout ship, many a weary mile  
Sailed forth, and found their lonely isle,  
And sped them to their homes again.

But I, as o'er this tale I stay  
My wandering fancy, seem to hear,  
A voice which comes my heart to cheer,  
A silent voice which seems to say,

"Thus is it with the world around,  
For tho' the messenger be gone,  
Some winged thought with his being  
    bound,

O'er all the world goes echoing on.

"And though its tones sound faint and  
    weak,

Lost in the rude world's clamorous strife,  
The message of dead lips can speak  
To souls in prison, words of life !"

*IN A GREAT LADY'S ALBUM.*

FLIT softly, Muse, on hesitating wing,  
Through this fair pleasure, vowed to  
    Prince and King.

Here, ranged apart, as in some leafy  
glade,  
Monarchs and statesmen court the  
grateful shade ;  
Poets and warriors side by side are  
found,  
And the grove echoes with harmonious  
sound.  
Science, with steady gaze and tranquil  
eye,  
And Faith triumphant soaring to the  
sky,  
The immemorial East delights to bring  
Its tribute to the clear Castalian spring.  
Where'er we stray some nobler foot has  
trod,  
And the awed gazer knows a demi-  
god.

Dreadst thou with daring pinion to in-  
vade  
The solitudes for finer natures made ?  
Nay, halt not ! Spread thy wings and  
raise thy song !  
Better the feebly right than basely  
strong ?  
Thou, too, art like to these, and with  
them one  
In nature, as the star is with the Sun.  
Here whoso greatly daring enters in,  
This truth shall learn, "the whole wide  
world is kin."  
From Prince to boor, old East, and  
larger West,  
One Truth, one Right, one Wisdom is  
confest ;  
One hate of Wrong, one love of nobler  
Thought ;  
One reverence for the universal Ought ;  
One worship of the one pervading Name,  
Through varying voices heard and yet  
the same !

## ON A SILVER WEDDING.

MARCH 10, 1888.

THE rapid tide of gliding years  
Flows gently by this Royal home,  
Unvexed by clouds of grief and tears  
Its tranquil seasons come.

To one, as happy and more great,  
Came earlier far, the dread alarm,  
The swift immedicable harm,  
The icy voice of Fate.

The gracious father of his race  
Heard it, too soon, and dared the night ;  
Death coming found him with the light  
Of Sunshine on his face.

He left his widowed Queen to move  
Alone in solitary sway,  
Alone, through her long after-day,  
But for her people's love.

Their saintly daughter, sweet and mild,  
Drew poison from her darling's breath ;  
Their young son trod the paths of death  
Far, far from love and child.

Nay, now by the Ausonian sea,  
Daughter of England, good and wise !  
Thou watchest, with sad anxious eyes,  
Thy flower of chivalry !

But this fair English home no shade  
Of deeper sorrow comes to blot,  
No grief for dear ones who are not,  
Nor voids which years have made.

One sickness only, when its head  
Lay long weeks, wrestling sore with  
death,  
And pitying England held her breath  
Despairing, round his bed.



No regal house of crownèd state,  
Nor lonely as the homes of kings  
Where the slow hours on leaden wings  
Oppress the friendless great.

But lit with dance and song and mirth,  
And graceful Art, and thought to raise,  
Crushed down by long laborious days,  
The toiler from the earth.

Its Lord an English noble, strong  
For public cares, for homely joys,  
A Prince among the courtly throng,  
A brother with his boys.

Who his Sire's footsteps loves to tread,  
In prudent schemes for popular good ;  
And strives to raise the multitude,  
Remembering the dead.

And having seen how far and wide  
Flies England's flag, by land and sea,  
Would bind in willing unity  
Her strong sons side by side.

Its gentle mistress, fair and sweet,  
A girlish mother, clothed with grace,  
With only summer on her face,  
Howe'er the swift years fleet.

Who was the Vision of our youth,  
Who is the Exemplar of our prime,  
Sweet Lady, breathing Love and Truth,  
With charms which vanquish Time.

Good sons in flowering manhood free,  
Girls fair in budding womanhood,  
An English household bright and good,  
A thousand such there be !

Great Heaven, how brief our Summers  
show !  
And fleeting as the flying Spring !

The almonds blush, the throistles sing,  
The vernal wind-flowers blow.

And yet 'tis five-and-twenty years,  
Since those March violets dewy-sweet,  
Were strewn before the maiden's feet,  
Amidst a people's cheers.

And mile on mile the acclaiming crowd  
Surged round her, as the soft Spring air  
With joy-bells reeled, and everywhere  
Roared welcome deep and loud.

While this, our trivial life to-day,  
Loomed a dim perilous landscape  
strange,  
Hid by thick mists of Time and Change,  
Unnumbered leagues away.

Long years ! long years ! and yet how  
nigh  
The dead Past shows, and still how far  
The Future's hidden glimpses are  
From mortal brain and eye.

What secrets here shall Time unfold ?  
What fates befall this gracious home ?  
Shall to-day's festal once more come,  
Ripened with time to gold ?

Heaven send it ! Close-knit hearts are  
here,  
Not that old hate of sire and heir ;  
Here flourish homely virtues fair,  
And love that conquers fear.

For these may Fortune grant again  
Their Sovereign's large and blameless  
life,  
Unmarred by care, undimmed by strife.  
Less touched than Hers by pain !

High set above the noise and dust  
Of Faction, and contented still  
To guide aright the popular will,  
By sympathy and trust !

Through civic wisdom temperate,  
And forethought for the general need,  
Keeping midst change of politic creed,  
A Throne, a People great !

*THE INVINCIBLE ARMADA, 1588.*

'Tis a fair eve at midsummer, three hundred years ago,  
Drake and his bold sea captains all are out on Plymouth Hoe ;  
They are busy at bowls, brave gentlemen, with jovial mirth and jest,  
When watching eyes spy far away a sail upon the West.

A sail ! ten sail ! a hundred sail ! nay nigh two hundred strong !  
And up the sea they swiftly climb in battle order long ;  
Their high main-royals rake the skies, as in a crescent wide,  
Like a thick wood, full seven miles broad, they sail on side by side.

There is swift alarm and hurry then, but never a thought of fear,  
As the seamen, with the falling night, behold the Don draw near.  
" Ring out the bells," cries Hawkins, and across the darkling main,  
England peals out defiance to the gathered hosts of Spain.

They do not fear the Don, not they, who on the Spanish main,  
Have fought his might and lowered his pride, again and yet again ;  
And yet 'tis fearful odds they face, when they sail forth to meet,  
Spain and her great Armada with the puny English fleet. .

And the streets grow thronged with seamen, and the crowds begin to shout,  
And quick oars dash and sails are set, before the stars come out.  
They weigh their anchors with a will, and out they speed to sea,  
Where up the Channel, stately, slowly, forge the enemy.

Now St. George for merry England, and St. James for Papal Spain, .  
Our seamen are our chiefest hope, nor shall we trust in vain.  
We have quenched the fires of Smithfield, and no more, 'fore God, we swear,  
Shall they ever again flame upward, through our sweet, free, English air.

Now when they neared the foeman, as he loomed across the sea,  
Lord Howard led the English van, a Catholic Lord was he,  
And his great Ark Royal thundered out her broadsides loud and long,  
With Drake and Frobisher hard by, and heroes in a throng.

But never a gun the Spaniards fired, but silent ploughed and slow,  
 As hisons in a sullen herd across the prairies go ;  
 And behind them close, like hunters swift, with hounds that snarl and bite,  
 The English squadrons followed through the breezy summer night.

They could see the Dons' high lanterns, in a brilliant crescent flare,  
 They could catch the Black Friars' moaning chant upon the midnight air.  
 All night they pressed them close, and ere the sun began to flame,  
 Long miles away, by blue Torbay, the warring galleons came.

Soon as the dawn began to glow, the guns began to roar,  
 All day the thundering navies fought along the Dorset shore,  
 Till Portland frowned before them, in the distance dark and grim,  
 And again the night stole downward, and the ghostly cliffs grew dim.

And already, praised be God, who guides the patriots' noble strife,  
 Though not an English flag is lost, and scarce an English life,  
 De Valdez yields his ship and sword, and into Weymouth Bay,  
 They tow Oquenda's burning bark, the galleon of Biscay.

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Day fades in night, 'mid stress of fight, and when to waking eyes,  
 Freshwater's ghostly sea cliffs, and the storm-worn Needles rise,  
 From a score of sheltered inlets on the smiling Solent sea,  
 England comes forth to aid her sons, with all her chivalry.

There sails my Lord of Cumberland, and he of Oxford too,  
 Brave Raleigh and Northumberland, and Grenville and Carew.  
 As to a field of honour hasten knights of deathless fame,  
 To meet the blue blood of Castile, the flower of England came.

Then with the wind, the foe faced round, and hissing o'er the blue,  
 Forth from his lofty broadsides vast his hurtling missiles flew ;  
 Long time the fight confusedly raged, each man for his own hand ;  
 St. George ! protect our country, and the freedom of our land !

See here round brave Ricaldes thick the English levies press !  
 See there the keels from London town, hemmed round and in distress !  
 Such thunder sure upon the seas was never heard before,  
 As the great ordnance smite the skies with one unceasing roll !

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Now when the fifth day of the fight was come, St. James's Day,  
 The sea was like a sheet of glass, the wind had died away,

And from out the smoke clouds looming vast, churning the deep to foam,  
Driven by three hundred oars the towering galliasses come.

But ere they neared the English line, a furious iron hail  
Of chain-shot and of grape-shot crashed through mast and oar and sail ;  
No more they could, they turned and fled, upon our English sea,  
Not yet such furious hatred raged, or stubborn bravery.

And upon the steep white walls of cliff and by the yellow sand,  
With pike and musket hurrying down the sturdy peasants stand,  
And the trembling women kneel and call upon the Holy name,  
And watch the thick black cloud which bursts in murderous jets of flame.

Now St. George for our old England ! for the Don has turned and fled,  
With many a strong ship sunk or burnt, and gallant seaman dead,  
And by the last day of the week, the warring squadrons lie,  
The foeman moored in Calais roads, the English watching by.

They sent for aid to Parma, for they were sore beset,  
But the Duke was at St. Mary's shrine, and could not succour yet,  
For by Nieuport and by Dunkirk, stern, immovable as Fate,  
With stalwart ships, and ordnance strong, the Dutchmen guard the gate.

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Now that great Sabbath dawns at last, and from the foeman's fleet,  
The deep mass-music rises, and the incense sickly-sweet,  
And beneath the flag of England, stern, with dauntless hearts and high,  
The seamen take the bread and wine, and rise prepared to die.

Then came Lord Henry Seymour, with a message from Her Grace,  
And Sir Francis read the missive with grave triumph on his face,  
And he swore an oath, that come what would, her orders should be done  
Before the early rose of dawn proclaimed the coming sun.

And the summer daylight faded, and 'twas midnight on the wave,  
And among the close-moored galleons, all was silent as the grave,  
And the bright poop lanterns rose and fell with the breathing of the deep,  
And silent rode the towering hulls, with the weary crews asleep.

When two brave men of Devon, for Sir Francis bade them go,  
With all sail set before the wind, stole down upon the foe ;  
And before the drowsy watchmen woke, the swift destruction came,  
As with a blaze of wildfire leapt the fireships into flame !

Then from the close-thronged ships of Spain loud cries of terror rise,  
As from their burning ranks the glare flares upward to the skies,  
With cables cut, and sails half set, they drift into the night,  
And many are crushed, and many burn, and some are sunk outright.

And the watchers on the Dover Cliffs know well what thing has been,  
And for noble England cheer aloud, and for her Maiden Queen.  
No more, no more, great England, shalt thou bow thy head again  
Beneath the Holy Office and the tyranny of Spain !

And the conquering English followed, and upon the Flanders shore,  
Hopeless the shattered galleons fought, till fight they could no more.  
And some went down with all their crews, and some beat helplessly  
Upon the yeasty quicksands of the perilous Northern Sea.

Then Sidonia with the remnant, shattered ships and wounded men,  
Fled northward, with the foe in chase, hoping for Spain again :  
But by the Orkneys, lo ! the Lord blew with a mighty wind,  
And on the cruel Irish West they left two score behind.

And the savage kerns of Desmond, when the stormy winds were o'er,  
Robbed the thronged corpses of the great, upon the lonely shore.  
There, in his gold-laced satins, lay the Prince of Asculè,  
'Mid friars, and seamen drowned and dead, and Dons of high degree.

Or faint with hunger and with thirst, though rescued from the wave,  
The haughty Spaniards knew in turn the misery of the slave.  
They ate the captives' bitter bread, they who brief weeks ago  
Sailed forth in high disdain and pride to lay our England low.

And the scattered remnant labouring back to Spain and life again,  
Left fourscore gallant ships behind and twice ten thousand men ;  
And when in dole and misery this great emprise was done,  
There was scarce a palace in all Castile which did not mourn a son.

---

Let not their land forget the men who fought so good a fight !  
Still shall our England keep undimmed their fame, their memory bright.  
And if again the foemen come in power upon the main,  
May she find sons as strong as those who broke the might of Spain !

ODE SUNG AT THE FIRST CO-  
OPERATIVE FESTIVAL.

AUGUST 17, 1888.

COME let us sing together a new song,  
The triumph of the weak made strong ;  
The victories of peace we celebrate,  
Not those of war and hate.

The victories of peace, won after many  
days :

Let us our voices tune to joy and  
praise ;

Come let us sing a new and happy  
song !

Time was when by his too-great toil  
bowed down,

The worker feared his master's frown ;  
For some scant wage chained to his  
hopeless task,

Nor ever dared to ask

For his young lives and piteous gains  
afraid,

A fitting share of that his hands had  
made ;

But now through union strong, the  
workers claim their own.

There is red war not fought with sword  
or gun,

Where, in deep peace, war's wrong is  
done ;

Where face to face in hostile camps  
they stand

Who should clasp hand with hand :

The rich man wailing slow in soulless  
case,

The poor man spent by toils and  
miseries.

Sing we a cheerful song, Time's curse  
is almost done.

Ay, almost done, but ah ! not wholly  
yet ;

Let not too sanguine souls forget  
Those for whom no man taketh thought  
or heed,

The hearts, the lives that bleed.

Let not our workers, strong in brother-  
hood,

Forget the friendless toiler's starving  
brood.

Mixt be our song with joy, yet not all  
cheerful yet.

Yet for to-day, at least, let us rejoice,  
Uplifting jubilant heart and voice.

Not what has been we hymn, but what  
shall be ;

Not the old misery,

But the new days when Man beneath  
the power

Of peaceful union blooms a perfect  
flower—

For this we choose not sorrow, but  
rejoice.

We come to-day in this our solemn  
mirth,

Bringing the flowers, the fruits, of earth,  
Reared by strong hands which labour  
glorifies.

Toil, honest toil we prize—

Look round and see how rich the har-  
vest grows,

The mellow fruits, the perfumed rose  
that glows

Raised by untiring toil from our good  
mother Earth.

See how to-day the long drawn vistas fill  
With fruit of every toiler's skill,

The man's strong gains, the woman's  
deft and fine ;

Here heart and brain combine

In pitying succour for the weak and  
dumb ;  
Here are fair schemes, to build the  
happy home,  
And children's work, and play, than  
work more precious still.

Therefore do we make merry and are  
glad ;  
No care to-day shall make us sad.  
We sing the song of wider brotherhood,  
Knit close for general good.  
We sing the higher social sense which  
binds  
Each for the general good, opposing  
minds.  
We hail thee, blessed Union, and are  
glad !  
And sing aloud together a new and  
cheerful song !

### TO JOHN BRIGHT.

MARCH 27, 1889.

FRIEND of the friendless else, and art  
thou dead ?  
Great Master of our vigorous Saxon  
speech,  
Unwearied pleader for the people's  
bread,  
Hater of war, strong to convince and  
teach,  
With passionate faith and indigna-  
tion strong,  
Mighty to slay the hydra-heads of  
wrong.

Thy voice was aye for Freedom, and  
thy heart  
Warlike for Peace, since o'er the open  
grave

Of thy young love, thou didst accept  
thy part  
To strike the shameful fetters from  
the slave,  
To lift the toiler from his hopeless  
lot,  
To plant the civic sense where it  
was not.

Thy soul was reared on fitting food ;  
thy tongue,  
Touched with our older England's  
purest fire ;  
The noblest strains our Island Muse has  
sung.  
Shakspeare and Milton did thy  
speech inspire ;  
The poets taught thy rhythmic  
periods strong ;  
And thy impetuous flights were  
winged with song.

Thou couldst not brook the faithless  
souls that dread  
To follow Right and leave the rest to  
God ;  
No selfish fear of careless riches bred  
Might turn thee from the path by  
Duty trod.  
England thou lovedst, and beyond  
set of sun  
A greater Kingdom still, and both  
made one !

Thy friend and comrade went his way  
alone ;  
Long years ago God called him, and  
he went.  
To him thy speech has reared, than  
sculptured stone,  
A statelier and more lasting monu-  
ment.

Long time were ye reviled, scorned,  
hated ; now  
A people's homage crowns each  
reverend brow.

Champion of Freedom, by thy hearse  
shall I

Keep silence —I who owe thee much  
indeed ?

A Prince among the People comes to  
die,

And shall no grateful son of verse  
take heed ?

Nay, on thy grave, ere falls the  
earth, I lay

This simple wreath to deck thy  
honoured clay !

#### ON ROBERT BLAKE.

ENGRAVED ON THE BRASS IN ST.  
MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

KINGDOM or Commonwealth were less  
to thee,

Than to crown England Queen o'er  
every sea.

Strong sailor, sleeping sound as sleep  
the just,

Rest here ! our Abbey keeps no wor-  
thier dust !

#### TO LORD TENNYSON.

ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY,  
AUGUST 6, 1889.

MASTER and seer ! too swift on noise-  
less feet

Thy hurrying decades fleet with  
stealthy pace ;

Yet not the less thy voice is clear and  
sweet,

And still thy genius mingles strength  
with grace.

On thy broad brow alone and  
reverend face

Thy four-score winters show, not on thy  
mind.

Stay, Time, a little while thy head-  
long chase !

Or passing, one Immortal leave behind ;  
For we are weak, and changeful as the  
wind.

For him long since the dying swan  
would sing,

The dead soul pine in splendid misery.  
He winged the legend of the blameless  
King,

And crossed to Lotusland the en-  
chanted sea ;

Heard the twin voices strive for  
mastery,

Faithful and faithless ; and with pre-  
scent thought

Saw Woman rising in the days to be  
To heights of knowledge in the past  
unsought ;

These his eye marked, and those his  
wisdom taught.

And he it was whose musing ear o'er-  
heard

The love-tale sweet in death and  
madness end ;

Who sang the deathless dirge, whose  
every word

Fashions a golden statue for his  
friend.

May all good things his waning years  
attend

Who told of Rizpah mourning for her  
dead !



Or in verse sweet as pitying ruth  
could lend  
The childish sufferer on her hopeless  
bed ;  
Thoughts, pure and high, of precious  
fancy bred.

His it is still to scan with patient eye  
The book of Nature, writ with herb  
and tree ;  
The buds of March unfold, the lush  
flowers die,  
When sighs of Autumn wail o'er land  
and sea,  
And those great orbs which wheel from  
age to age,  
Cold, unregarding fires that seem to  
blight  
All yearning hope and chill all noble  
rage ;  
And yet were dead, and void, maybe,  
of light,  
Till first they swam upon a mortal's  
sight.

Master and friend, stay yet, for there is  
none  
Worthy to take thy place to-day, or  
wear  
Thy laurel when thy singing-days are  
done.  
As yet the halls of song are mute and  
bare,  
Nor voice melodious wakes the tune-  
less air,  
Save some weak faltering accents faintly  
heard.  
Stay with us ; 'neath thy spell the  
world grows fair.  
Our hearts revive, our inmost souls are  
stirred,  
And all our English race awaits thy  
latest word !

## TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

REVISITING WALES.

AUGUST 24, 1889.

WELCOME, dear Lady, welcome once  
again,  
To thine own land—nor for the last  
time come.  
Small is our Gwalla, but a fair domain,  
Who comes to her comes home.  
Come now and often, still our warm  
hearts burn,  
Though the swift winters close or dim  
the eyes  
That saw thee last ; to thee our spirits  
turn,  
Still to our lips true words of welcome  
rise.  
Dear Lady ! welcome, welcome home !  
Our Cymric eyes grow bright to see  
our Sovereign come.

Once long ago, didst thou, a careless  
child,  
With smooth young brow on which the  
Imperial Crown  
Weighed not as yet, amidst our hill-  
sides wild  
Abide, and with thine own  
Didst spend thy Springtime's joyous  
hours and bright,  
Safe-guarded by a mother's tender care.  
Then all the unfolding world showed  
clear and fair  
To thy unwearied mind and eager sight ;  
Ah ! it is blest indeed to be  
In life's young morn with all fair things  
to see !

And then thou camest to thy Wales  
once more.  
In happy wedlock, by the knightly arm

Of thy new Arthur, sheltered safe from  
harm,  
By Menai's sounding shore,  
Strong in Love's strength, as one who  
seemed to bear  
A potent talisman to shield from  
ill.  
But what defence averts the stroke of  
care,  
Or blunts the shafts of Heaven's mys-  
terious will!  
Grief dwelt with thee long time, but  
now  
The crown of Resignation decks thy  
brow.

Dear Lady, we are feeble folk, and  
weak,  
But our old tongue and loyal hearts we  
keep;  
We cherish still the love we may not  
speak--  
The old affection deep.  
Still is our Wales "a sea of song," and  
still  
From smiling valley, and from soaring  
hill,  
Eryri's snows and fair Clwyd's verdant  
plain,  
Or that strange shrine upon the Western  
Main,  
There comes a universal voice  
Of welcome to our Queen, bidding all  
hearts rejoice.

VENITE PROCIDAMUS.

Our hopes, our fears,  
Our love and hate,  
Our joys and tears,  
Our throws with fate,

What are they all but phantoms fleeting  
past,  
Weak creatures of a day, which but a  
day may last?

But the great Scheme  
Fares on its course  
Tho' Time's long dream  
Of changing force,

It saw the plesiosaur and mastodon  
Wax strong, and dwindle down, and  
still goes silent on.

It saw the ape  
Rule every land,  
The cave-man shape  
Flints for his hand.

It saw a thousand generations pass  
Across life's mournful stage, like visions  
in a glass.

It saw the strange  
Forgotten Kings,  
Ages of change,  
Terrible things.

It saw the Egyptian and Assyrian come,  
The gay Hellenic bloom, the rugged  
sway of Rome.

These too it saw  
Totter and fall,  
A purer law  
O'er-ruling all,

And then the arrested march, the long  
delay,  
The baffled hope, the Dawn fading to  
common day.

It makes no cry,  
It lifts no voice,  
Tho' all things die,  
Tho' all rejoice,

It goes unceasing onward, blind and  
dumb,  
Nor halts, nor hastes, nor heeds what-  
ever things may come.

Eternal Scheme,  
Great Lord of all,  
August, Supreme,  
Prostrate we fall,  
We cannot know Thy working, nor its  
end,  
Nor by what hidden paths Thy Perfect  
Will may lead.

But if one word  
Might come, or sign,  
Our souls were stirred  
To growths divine,  
No longer should we walk in fear and  
doubt,  
Like children in dark ways, before the  
stars come out.

Ah no ! the word  
The soul can hear

Is only heard  
By the inner ear,  
No outward light it is which can  
illumine  
The spiritual eye, and pierce the en-  
shrouding gloom,

An inborn light,  
An inner voice,  
Which burneth bright,  
Which doth rejoice,  
A faith in things unseen, an inward  
sight  
Which thro' a wicked world sees the  
victory of Right

With this our guide,  
Our strength, our stay,  
No more aside  
Our footsteps stray.  
Fulfil Thyself, Great Scheme, Eternal  
Plan,  
Work out - we ask no word - the  
Destiny of Man.















